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No.

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IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, 1983

OIL, CHEMICAL, AND ATOMIC WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL UNION AND ITS LOCAL 4-23,
v. *Petitioners,*

RAYMOND J. DONOVAN, SECRETARY OF LABOR,
and

AMERICAN PETROFINA CO. OF TEXAS,
Respondents.

**PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT**

JOHN R. TADLOCK
General Counsel
OIL, CHEMICAL &
ATOMIC WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL
UNION
P. O. Box 2812
Denver, Colorado 80201

Of Counsel:

GEORGE H. COHEN
DAVID M. SILBERMAN
1000 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

LAURENCE GOLD
815 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 637-5390
(Counsel of Record)

QUESTION PRESENTED

Rule 100 of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission's rules of procedure requires that a settlement that would resolve a case within the Commission's jurisdiction must be submitted to the Commission for a determination as to whether the settlement is consistent with the objectives of the Act and that the representative of the affected employees—as a party to the case—be afforded an opportunity to voice its views concerning the settlement.

The question presented here is whether the court below erred in holding that this Commission regulation is invalid and that the Commission is without authority to review the settlement of cases within its jurisdiction.

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v.

RAYMOND J. DONOVAN, SECRETARY OF LABOR,
and

AMERICAN PETROFINA CO. OF TEXAS,
Respondents.

**PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT**

The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, and its Local 4-23, hereby petition for a writ of certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit to review the judgment in *Donovan v. Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union*, 718 F.2d 1341 (5th Cir. 1983).

OPINIONS BELOW

The two opinions of Administrative Law Judges of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission ("OSHRC") approving the settlement agreements at issue here are not officially reported, and are reprinted as

Appendices E and F to this petition. The two orders of OSHRC directing review of the ALJ opinions are not officially reported, and are reprinted as Appendices C and D. The order of OSHRC denying the Secretary of Labor's motion to vacate the direction for review is not officially reported and is reprinted as Appendix B. The decision of the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit granting the Secretary's petition for review is reported at 718 F.2d 1341, and is reprinted as Appendix A.

JURISDICTION

The judgment of the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit was entered on November 7, 1983. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1254 (1).

STATUTORY PROVISIONS INVOLVED

The statutory provisions involved are reprinted as Appendix G to this petition.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

In September-October, 1979 and again in November, 1979, authorized representatives of the Secretary of Labor ("the Secretary") conducted inspections pursuant to the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, 29 U.S.C. § 651 *et seq.* ("the OSH Act" or "the Act") of the Port Arthur, Texas, oil refinery of American Petrofina Company of Texas ("the Company"). Each of those inspections uncovered numerous violations of the Act, including, of particular relevance here, several violations of the standard governing occupational exposure to asbestos that the Secretary had promulgated, 29 C.F.R. § 1910.1001.

Following each inspection the Secretary issued citations charging the Company with numerous serious (and some non-serious) violations of the Act.¹ The first citation

¹ Under § 17 of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 666, the penalty for a violation depends, *inter alia*, upon whether the violation is found to be willful, serious, or non-serious.

charged the company, *inter alia*, with failing to conduct monitoring of asbestos exposure levels in an area of the plant in which asbestos insulation was being removed as part of a construction project; the second citation charged the company with, *inter alia*, a further failure to conduct monitoring during this construction project, a failure to label asbestos-containing materials, and a failure to properly dispose of asbestos waste. The Secretary proposed penalties totaling \$6,100.

Proceedings Before The Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission

The employer filed a timely notice of contest of each citation in accordance with § 10(c) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 659(c). The Secretary notified the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission ("OSHRC" or "the Commission") of these notices of contest as required by the Act, *id.*, and a complaint and an answer were filed in each case with the Commission. Petitioners Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union and its Local 4-23 (collectively referred to herein as "the Union"), the bargaining representative of the production and maintenance workers at the Company's Port Arthur refinery, elected "party" status pursuant to § 10(c) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 659(c) and Rule 20 of the Commission's rules of procedure, 29 C.F.R. § 2200.20.

On November 13, 1980, the Secretary and the Company reached settlement agreements in each case. Under those agreements, certain of the asbestos-related items were withdrawn from the Secretary's citations, others were downgraded from serious to non-serious violations, and the proposed penalty was reduced to \$680. Of even more importance from the perspective of the Union, the settlements represented that the cited conditions had been abated, and required no abatement action.

Pursuant to Rule 100 of the Commission's rules of procedure, 29 C.F.R. § 2200.100, the Secretary and the

Company submitted their settlement agreements to the Administrative Law Judges to whom the two cases were assigned. The Union urged that the settlements not be approved by the ALJs, contending, *inter alia*, that the asbestos-related violations had not been abated and that therefore the settlements were contrary to the purposes of the Act.²

The ALJs to which the two cases were assigned issued decisions approving the settlements and overruling the Union's objections. The Union petitioned the Commission for discretionary review in each case and the Commission granted those petitions.

On February 25, 1983, the Secretary filed a "Motion to Vacate the Commission's Direction for Review." In that motion the Secretary contended that "the decision to settle a case properly belongs to the Secretary and the Commission is without jurisdiction to review the Secretary's determination." The Secretary recognized only one exception to this asserted rule: because under the first sentence of § 10(c) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 659(c), a union may initiate a contest of a citation before the Commission if the union believes the time period provided for abatement in the citation is unreasonably long, the Secretary acknowledged that a union likewise could object to a settlement on this ground. The Secretary argued, however, that "other objections are not permitted."

² The Secretary's citations had involved a construction project at a particular location within the plant; the representation that the violation had been abated was based solely on the fact that the particular project had been completed. It was the Union's contention that the same violations would occur elsewhere at the plant as soon as construction was started in those other locations; the Union argued that the employer by contesting the citation while the construction was in progress had effectively avoided any duty to take any corrective action whatsoever, and that to prevent recurrence of the problem the settlement should have required the Company to comply with the asbestos standard throughout the plant during future construction.

On March 25, 1983, the Commission entered an order denying the Secretary's motion. On April 6, 1983, the Secretary filed a petition for review in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit challenging the Commission's failure to vacate the direction for review.³

The Decision of the Court of Appeals

On November 7, 1983, the court of appeals issued its decision granting the Secretary's petition for review and directing the Commission to vacate its review order and to dismiss the Union's request for Commission review of the settlements. That court reached this result through an unusual and tortuous course.

The court of appeals devoted the great bulk of its opinion to demonstrating why the Secretary's legal position is wrong and why it is appropriate for the Commission to entertain union objections to a settlement agreement.⁴ The court below concluded: "[w]ere we writing on a clean slate, we would be inclined to uphold the

³ The petition for review referred to in text actually was the second petition for review that the Secretary filed. In his motion to vacate the direction for review the Secretary stated that "if the Commission does not vacate the directions for review within five (5) days of the filing of this Motion, that failure shall be treated as a denial of the motion for purposes of further proceedings in this matter." On March 7, 1983—ten days after the motion was filed—the Secretary filed a petition for review apparently premised on the theory that the Commission's inaction as of that point should be treated as a denial of the motion.

Two weeks later the Commission entered the order referred to in text denying the Secretary's motion; the Secretary filed a second petition for review in court. Eventually, the Secretary's first, premature petition for court review was dismissed.

⁴ That court first concluded that the Commission's order denying the motion to vacate the direction for review was an appealable order under *Cohen v. Beneficial Finance Industrial Corp.*, 337 U.S. 541 (1949). See App. 4a-8a. The Union does not seek review here of the decision on this question.

Union and Commission position, and to rule that an employee may seek review of the terms of a settlement agreement notwithstanding the employer's withdrawal of its notice of contest" (*id.* 19a); indeed, that court added that "it would be inconsistent" with its view of the statutory structure "to permit the employer to reach an *ex parte* agreement with the Secretary (*id.* 21a). But the court below went on to explain that because of opposite decisions in *other* circuits "we feel constrained to adopt the Secretary's interpretation" (*Id.* 22a). That court elaborated:

In an administrative territory as vast as is OSHA, the need for uniformity is apparent. Were we to march to the beat of our own drummer, a gross disparity would arise between the Secretary's ability to settle cases in this circuit and his ability to do so elsewhere. Therefore, rather than profess telepathy from the collective mind of the 1970 Congress, we acknowledge that the Act can reasonably be interpreted more than one way, and we adopt a course that at least will not precipitate administrative chaos. [*Id.* 23a]

The Union seeks to have this Court review the decision below and, through it, the decisions of the other circuits that the court below viewed as wrongly decided yet binding.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT

I. The Courts of Appeals Have Reached Conflicting Conclusions on a Question Whose Resolution Is Central to the Enforcement of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

From its earliest days, the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission has required that a settlement that would resolve a case within its jurisdiction must be submitted to the Commission for a determination as to whether the settlement is consistent with the objectives of

the Act. As part of this process the Review Commission requires that the representative of the affected employees—as a party to the case—be afforded an opportunity to voice its views concerning the settlement. These requirements are embodied in regulations that the Commission promulgated shortly after the Act was passed pursuant to an express grant of rulemaking authority, and to which the Commission has consistently adhered thereafter. See pp. 10-12, *infra*.

From the time these regulations were promulgated and continuing for eight years the Secretary of Labor—the official charged with the responsibility to make the inspections and issue the citations that precipitate proceedings before the Commission—accepted the validity of the Commission's regulations and submitted thousands of settlements of OSHRC cases to the Commission for its review. See pp. 11-12, *infra*. The Secretary has now made a complete about-face, maintaining that the Act grants him an absolute and unreviewable discretion to settle cases that are pending before the Commission and denies the Commission the authority to review settlements.

Because the Commission generally has been held not to be entitled to appear in court,⁸ OSHRC has been unable to defend its own regulations and practice. But the authority of the Commission with respect to settlements has been litigated in a series of cases like the instant case in

⁸ See *Marshall v. Sun Petroleum Products Co.*, 622 F.2d 1176, 1180-84 (3rd Cir. 1980), *cert. denied*, 449 U.S. 1061; *Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers v. OSHRC*, 671 F.2d 643, 651-52 (D.C. Cir. 1982), *cert. denied*, 103 S.Ct. 206; *Marshall v. OSHRC*, 635 F.2d 544, 547 (6th Cir. 1980); *Dunlop v. Don L. Cooney, Inc.*, 3 BNA OSHC 1109 (9th Cir. 1975); see also *Donovan v. Allied International Workers*, 11 BNA OSHC 1737, 1740 (8th Cir., Dec. 13, 1983) (*dictum*). As explained in those cases, early versions of the bills that became the OSH Act contained a provision which would have authorized the Commission to appear in court to defend its actions, but that provision did not survive in the bill that ultimately was enacted. *Marshall v. Sun Petroleum Products*, *supra*, 622 F.2d at 1182-83.

which the Secretary has sought to block a hearing requested by a union for the purpose of allowing the union to present objections to a settlement.

In these cases several courts of appeals have concluded—in two instances by divided votes—that notwithstanding its regulations and long-standing practice, the Commission does not have the authority to review a settlement even when a union which is party to the case objects to the settlement as inadequate to remedy the violation.⁶ The court below reached the opposite conclusion: that court read the statute as allowing “an employee [to] seek [Commission] review of the terms of a settlement agreement” (pp. 5-6, *supra*). But in order to avoid the “administrative chaos” that the court below feared would result from conflicting holdings on this issue, that court set aside its understanding of Congress’ intent and acquiesced in the decisions of the other circuits (*see* p. 6, *supra*).

By thus ignoring its own best judgment as to the proper construction of the Act, the court below may have technically avoided a circuit conflict. But as the Secretary himself has acknowledged, the *reasoning* of the court below is “diametrically opposed” to that of other circuits and, indeed, “conflicts with” decisions of those circuits.⁷ This disagreement among the circuits constitutes a sufficient ground itself for this Court to review the decision below.

Moreover, the importance of the question presented here to the overall enforcement of the Act cannot be

⁶ *See Marshall v. Sun Petroleum Products Co.*, *supra*, n.5 (divided opinion, Pollack, J., dissenting); *Donovan v. Allied Industrial Workers*, *supra*, n.5 (divided opinion, Arnold, J., dissenting); *Donovan v. OSHRC*, 713 F.2d 918 (2d Cir. 1983); *Donovan v. Steelworkers*, 11 BNA OSHC 1698 (4th Cir., Nov. 1, 1983). *See also Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers v. OSHRC*, *supra*, 671 F.2d at 649 (dictum).

⁷ Secretary of Labor’s Motion to Authorize Publication of Opinion (at 4) in *Donovan v. Steelworkers*, No. 82-1885 (4th Cir., Nov. 17, 1983).

overstated. What is at issue is whether workers—and the public generally—have any administrative recourse with respect to the Secretary's decision to settle an OSHRC case.

That question would be of great moment even if settlements were used only occasionally to resolve contested cases, for to sustain the Secretary's claim of unreviewable authority—as the court below has done—is to allow the Secretary *carte blanche* to enter into any settlement, regardless of whether the settlement flouts the policies of the Act or is tainted by corrupt or otherwise impermissible considerations. In fact, however, far from being used occasionally, settlements are employed to resolve over 90% of contested cases that come before the Commission.⁸

Thus, determining the appropriate role of the Secretary, the Commission, and employee representatives in the settlement process is critical to shaping the overall enforcement scheme of the Act.

II. The Holding of the Court Below Is Contrary to the Language, Structure and Purpose of the OSH Act.

As just noted, the court below, while acquiescing in the decisions of other circuits to avoid "administrative chaos," nonetheless recognized that properly construed the OSH Act permits a union to "seek review of the terms of a settlement agreement"; indeed, in that court's view "it would be inconsistent with [the statutory scheme] to permit the employer to reach an *ex parte* agreement with the Secretary" (p. 6, *supra*). As we proceed to show, the

⁸ In *Mobil Oil Corp.*, 10 BNA OSHC 1905, 1932 n.18 (1982), *rev'd*, 713 F.2d 918 (2d Cir. 1983), Chairman Rowland, dissenting, reported that "Commission records reveal that, in fiscal 1981, 92.7% of case dispositions by Commission administrative law judges occurred prior to a hearing. These dispositions include settlements, withdrawals of citations by the Secretary, and withdrawals of notices of contest by employers." The Secretary advised the court below in the instant case that in fiscal year 1982 "the ratio of cases settled to hearings held . . . [was] roughly 10 to 1." Supplemental Memorandum for the Secretary at 2 & n.1; see also App. 28a.

lower court's understanding of the Act accords with Congress' intent, and its holding, acquiescing in the contrary decisions by other courts, is erroneous.

A. We start, of course, with the language of the statute. Under the Act, the Commission's jurisdiction is invoked when an employer files a notice of contest of a citation issued by the Secretary. § 10(c), 29 U.S.C. § 659 (c). The Act does not prescribe in detail the procedures to be followed in resolving cases once the Commission's jurisdiction has been invoked; instead what the Act provides is that

The Commission is authorized to make such rules as are necessary for the orderly transaction of its proceedings. Unless the Commission has adopted a different rule, its proceedings shall be in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. [§ 12(g), 29 U.S.C. § 661(f)]

The Act adds one further requirement:

The rules of procedure prescribed by the Commission shall provide affected employees or representatives of affected employees an opportunity to participate as parties to hearings. . . . [§ 10(c), 29 U.S.C. § 659 (c)]

B. The OSH Act became effective on April 28, 1971. In August, 1971, the Review Commission issued interim rules, 36 Fed. Reg. 169 (Aug. 31, 1971), and in September, 1972 the Commission promulgated permanent regulations, 37 Fed. Reg. 20239 (Sept. 28, 1972), to govern proceedings in cases before it. Both the interim and permanent rules provided for Commission review of settlements. Rule 23 of the interim rules stated:

If all parties agree, settlement will be allowed at any stage of the proceeding, *subject to the approval of the Examiner* who shall certify that such settlement is consistent with the provisions of the Act. Settlement agreements submitted by the parties shall be accompanied by an appropriate proposed order. [36 Fed. Reg. 169; emphasis added]

Rule 100 of the permanent rules carried forward the same requirement with more detail:

(a) Settlement is encouraged at any stage of the proceedings where such settlement is consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act.

(b) Settlement agreements submitted by the parties shall be accompanied by an appropriate proposed order.

(c) Where parties to settlement agree upon a proposal, it shall be served upon represented and unrepresented affected employees. . . . [37 Fed. Reg. 20239] *

Pursuant to this regulation, the Commission, from its earliest days, has undertaken to review settlement agreements to assure that they are "consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act."¹⁰ The Secretary ac-

* Rule 100 has since been amended, 44 Fed. Reg. 70106 (Dec. 5, 1979), but the substance of the rule remains unchanged; indeed the Rule is now even more explicit in requiring Commission approval of settlements as the Rule now states: "A settlement proposal shall be approved when it is inconsistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act." 29 C.F.R. § 2200.100.

The Commission's regulations also provide—and have provided from the very beginning—that to withdraw a notice of contest, the employer must obtain leave of the Commission. 29 C.F.R. § 2200.100a; see also 36 Fed. Reg. 169 (interim rule 11); 37 Fed. Reg. 20239 (permanent rule 50); *Dawson Brothers—Mechanical Contractors*, 1 BNA OSHC 1024 (1972); *Gurney Industries, Inc.*, 1 BNA OSHC 1218 (1973), *app. dismissed* No. 73-1813 (4th Cir. 1973).

In this regard, the Commission's regulations parallel Rule 41 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure which provides that after an answer is filed, an action may be dismissed only by order of a court or with the consent of all parties.

¹⁰ See, e.g., *Dawson Brothers—Mechanical Contractors*, *supra*, n.9; *Gurney Industries, Inc.*, *supra*, n.9; *Matt J. Zaich Construction Co.*, 1 BNA OSHC 1225 (1973); *Blaisdell Manufacturing Inc.*, 1 BNA OSHC 1406 (1973); *American Airlines, Inc.*, 2 BNA OSHC 1391

cepted the validity of Rule 100 for years, and submitted tens of thousands of proposed settlements to the Commission for its approval; indeed, in this very case the Secretary submitted the settlements to the Commission along with a "motion to affirm" (App. 38a). And in other cases the Secretary actually invoked the Commission's authority to *set aside* a settlement where union objections had not been considered or where the settlement was otherwise inconsistent with the requirements of the Act as construed by the Commission.¹¹

It is, of course, settled that an administrative agency's long-standing and consistent interpretation of the law the agency is charged with administering is entitled to great deference from the courts especially where, as here, that interpretation is embodied in a regulation which the agency is expressly authorized to promulgate. *E.g., Udall v. Tallman*, 380 U.S. 1, 16 (1965); *FEC v. Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee*, 454 U.S. 27, 36-39 (1981). Such deference is especially appropriate here since the Commission's interpretation of the Act dates to the passage of the Act and was accepted by the Secretary at that time and for many years thereafter. *Cf. Norwegian Nitrogen Products Co. v. United States*, 288 U.S. 294, 315 (1933).

(1974); *Logan County Farm Enterprises, Inc.*, 7 BNA OSHC 1275 (1979); *Globe Industries, Inc.*, 7 BNA OSHC 1312 (1979); *Farmers Export Co.*, 8 BNA OSHC 1655 (1980); *Weldship Corp.*, 8 BNA OSHC 2044 (1980); *Raybestos Friction Materials Co.*, 9 BNA OSHC 1141 (1980).

¹¹ See, *e.g., Weldship Corp.*, *supra*, 8 BNA OSHC at 2045; *Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corp.*, 6 BNA OSHC 2172, 2173 (1978); *American Airlines, Inc.*, *supra*, 2 OSHC at 1391-92.

In 1978, the Commission proposed revisions to Rule 100 and publicly solicited comments on its proposal. 43 Fed. Reg. 36854 (Aug. 18, 1978). The Secretary submitted an extensive Statement of Position at that time in which he stated that "we have no objections to most of the provisions of Rule 100," and urged only that the Commission not require that a proposed settlement be served upon employee representatives ten days before the settlement was submitted to the administrative law judge; the Secretary suggested instead that "em-

C. The statutory structure and legislative history of the Act confirm that the Commission acted within its authority in promulgating Rule 100.

1. The requirement that the Commission approve of a settlement agreement in pending cases comports with the language of the Act concerning OSHRC proceedings. The first two sentences of § 10(c), 29 U.S.C. § 659(c), which govern cases before the Commission, provide in pertinent part as follows:

If an employer notifies the Secretary that he intends to contest a citation . . . the Secretary shall immediately advise the Commission of such notification, and the Commission shall afford an opportunity for a hearing. . . . The Commission shall thereafter issue an order, based on findings of fact, affirming, modifying or vacating the Secretary's citation or proposed penalty, or directing other appropriate relief. . . .¹²

This provision thus contemplates that cases that come before the Commission will be resolved by a Commission "order."¹³ This is precisely the effect of Rule 100's re-

employees can be adequately protected by providing that the proposed settlement be filed with the judge and served simultaneously on employees and that the judge delay his decision to approve or disapprove the settlement for 10 days" during which time "employees may file their objections to the settlement." The Commission accepted the Secretary's position in its final regulation. See 29 C.F.R. § 2200.100(c).

¹² We discuss the elided portion of the first sentence having to do with cases precipitated by an employee representative rather than by an employer at pp. 18-21, *infra*.

¹³ See also § 12(j), 29 U.S.C. § 661(i):

An administrative law judge appointed by the Commission shall hear, and make a determination upon, any proceeding instituted before the Commission and any motion in connection therewith . . . and shall make a report of any such determination which constitutes his final disposition of the proceedings. The report of the administrative law judge shall become the final order of the Commission within thirty days . . . unless within such period any Commission member has directed that such report shall be reviewed by the Commission.

quirement that settlement agreements be submitted to the Commission for its review.

2. By allowing employees or their representatives to be heard on objections to settlements, Rule 100 implements the command of the final sentence of § 10(c) which directs the Commission to "provide affected employees or representatives . . . an opportunity to participate as parties to hearings." As the court below observed, "[t]he word 'parties' usually connotes persons entitled to participate fully in litigation (App. 15a; see *id.* 21a).¹⁴ And "it would be inconsistent with that view to permit the employer to reach an *ex parte* agreement with the Secretary" (*Id.* 21a).

Indeed, as the court below also recognized, in enacting the OSH Act, Congress "attempted to erect a comprehensive structure that would allow for meaningful participation of those most personally concerned with workplace safety—the workers" (*Id.* 16a). The portion of § 10(c) just quoted is one piece of this "comprehensive structure."¹⁵ And it would be contrary to the structure as a whole—as well, as to the literal words of § 10(c)—to deny employees any meaningful role at the critical stage at which the Secretary seeks to compromise a citation.

3. By providing a check on the Secretary's authority to settle cases, Rule 100 furthers the congressional policies underlying the creation of OSHRC. The legislative history makes clear that, as Senator Javits, the ranking

¹⁴ "[W]here words are employed in a statute which had at the time a well-known meaning . . . in the law of this country they are presumed to have been used in that sense unless the context compels to the contrary." *Lorillard v. Pons*, 434 U.S. 575, 583 (1978). This is so because "Congress is predominantly a lawyer's body, and it is appropriate for us 'to assume that our elected representatives know the law.'" *Albernaz v. United States*, 450 U.S. 333, 341 (1981).

¹⁵ For a detailed review of the structure of the Act as a whole insofar as it pertains to employee participation, see *Marshall v. Sun Petroleum Products Co.*, *supra*, 622 F.2d at 1189-90 n.3 (Pollack, J., dissenting).

Republican on the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, observed, "[t]he key issue" in the debates, and one so hotly contested "as to jeopardize seriously the prospects for enactment of th[e] bill," was whether enforcement of the Act should be assigned to the Secretary, who would also have investigatory and prosecutorial functions, or to an independent agency.¹⁶ Those who urged separating these functions argued:

The concentration of all authority for the promulgation of standards, the inspection and investigation of complaints, the prosecution of cases, and the adjudication of cases, totally in the hands of the Secretary of Labor is not a balanced approach.

* * * *

It is objectionable because concentration of power gives rise to a great potential for abuse. *A single man is easier to harass than an independent board or commission.* Political pressure can be concentrated to achieve a particular point of view or course of action.¹⁷

After prolonged debate, Congress adopted this view, deciding that enforcement cases would be resolved by a panel of Commissioners "appointed solely on the basis of their professional qualifications,"¹⁸ which "would not be

¹⁶ S. Rep. No. 91-1282, 91st Cong., 2d Sess. 55-56 (1970) (individual views of Sen. Javits), reprinted in Sen. Subcomm. on Labor of the Comm. on Labor and Public Welfare, 92d Cong., 1st Sess., *Legislative History of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970* (Comm. Print 1971) ("Leg. Hist.") at 193-194.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 420 (Sen. Dominick) (emphasis added). Senator Dominick "played a prominent role" in the Senate's consideration of the legislation. *American Textile Mfrs. Inst. v. Donovan*, 452 U.S. 490, 517 (1981). See, e.g., Leg. Hist. at 526 (Sen. Javits); *id.*, at 527 (Sen. Williams).

¹⁸ *Id.* at 392 (Sen. Javits). Under the statute, the members of the Commission are required to be specially qualified "by reason of training, education or experience in the field." 29 U.S.C. § 661(a). In addition, each Commissioner is appointed to a six-year term

a Labor Department instrument.”¹⁹ Reviewing settlement agreements thus is entirely in keeping with the mission Congress entrusted to the Commission.²⁰

D. In the face of the statutory language and structure just reviewed, the courts that have invalidated Rule 100

and cannot be removed except for “inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office.” 29 U.S.C. § 661(b).

¹⁹ Leg. Hist. at 462-463 (Sen. Javits).

²⁰ In deciding to separate prosecutorial and adjudicative functions, Congress had in mind the model of the National Labor Relations Act. See Leg. Hist. at 334 (Senator Saxbe); *id.* at 473 (Senator Holland). At the time the OSH Act was enacted—as today—the regulations of the NLRB contemplated that once the General Counsel filed a complaint with the Board, the case ordinarily would not be settled without the consent of the Board, see 32 Fed. Reg. 9547 (July 1, 1967); indeed, the Third Circuit had held that “[a]nything less . . . is arbitrary and capricious.” *Leeds & Northrop Co. v. NLRB*, 357 F.2d 527, 533 (3d Cir. 1966). It was equally clear, at the time the OSH Act was enacted, that when a settlement was submitted to the Labor Board for its consideration “the Board, like a court presented with a consent decree, is not required to enter it.” *Teamsters Local 282 v. NLRB*, 339 F.2d 795, 799 (2d Cir. 1964). And while the precise scope of the rights of a charging party to object to a proposed settlement of an unfair labor practice complaint were not completely fixed as of 1970, it was generally understood that the charging party “is given the opportunity for submission of facts and argument and is recognized as having a substantial part in assisting the Board in fulfilling its public responsibilities.” *Textile Workers of America v. NLRB*, 294 F.2d 738, 740 (D.C. Cir. 1961); see also *Marine Engineers Benevolent Ass’n v. NLRB*, 202 F.2d 546 (Sd Cir. 1953), *cert. denied*, 346 U.S. 819; *Leeds & Northrop Co. v. NLRB*, *supra*; *Auto Workers v. NLRB*, 231 F.2d 237, 242 (7th Cir. 1956) (dictum).

As Judge Pollack concluded in *Marshall v. Sun Petroleum*, *supra*, “[i]t is improbable that Congress, writing against this backdrop of the National Labor Relations Act practice, could have intended any lesser role for the complaining employees under OSHA by explicitly providing them the right ‘to participate as a party.’” 622 F.2d at 1191 n.5.

have relied on two principal arguments; neither supports the conclusion those courts have reached.

1. The first argument that has been invoked to preclude Commission review of settlement agreements proceeds from the undeniable proposition that under the Act, "neither the Commission nor the Union c[an] force [the Secretary] to bring the citation in the first place, or to prosecute it if he decided it was not worth pursuing." *Donovan v. Allied Industrial Workers*, *supra*, 11 BNA OSHC at 1741. From this premise the courts have erroneously leaped to the conclusion that the Secretary's prosecutorial discretion is such that once he decides to settle a case the Commission's role is necessarily at an end.²¹

In other contexts it is well-established that once the jurisdiction of an adjudicative tribunal attaches, the tribunal's jurisdiction is not automatically defeated simply because the party who initiated the case chooses to abandon it; this is true, for example, under the NLRA, *see* n.20, *supra*, and under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, *see* n.9, *supra*. Indeed, if the rule were otherwise any statute that vested exclusive prosecutorial authority in a public prosecutor necessarily would give the prosecutor unfettered and unreviewable discretion to settle cases without consideration of the objections of

²¹ *See also* *Marshall v. Sun Petroleum Products Co.*, *supra*, 622 F.2d at 1184-85; *Donovan v. OSHRC*, *supra*, 713 F.2d at 926-27, 930.

As a corollary to the prosecutorial-discretion argument, the courts also have maintained that since an employer's notice of contest ordinarily is required to create OSHRC jurisdiction, the withdrawal of such notice necessarily divests the Commission of jurisdiction. *See id.* But this argument assumes its conclusion, for the very issue here is whether an employer may withdraw his notice of contest absent the Commission's consent. And as explained in text there is nothing unusual or illogical in concluding that once a tribunal's jurisdiction attaches to a case, a party's desire to withdraw a document that was necessary to confer jurisdiction in the first instance is not *ipso facto* sufficient to divest the tribunal of jurisdiction.

other parties such as intervenors. For in each such case it would be true that the tribunal's jurisdiction depended in the first instance upon the prosecutor's decision to prosecute. Yet "[i]n appropriate circumstances the Court has made clear that traditions of prosecutorial discretion d[o] not immunize from judicial scrutiny cases in which the enforcement decisions of an administrator were . . . contrary to law." *Marshall v. Jerrico, Inc.*, 446 U.S. 238, 249 (1980); cf. *Dunlop v. Bachowski*, 421 U.S. 560 (1975).²²

Moreover, in the context of the OSH Act in particular, it is not at all anomalous that while a citation and notice of contest are required to create Commission jurisdiction, a settlement between the Secretary and the employer does not preclude the Commission from entertaining employee objections to the settlement. As the court below explained:

By conditioning [employees'] full participation on the employer's filing of a notice of contest, the Act can be seen as striking a balance between expeditious prosecution of citations (allowing uncontested ones to become final . . .) and the employees' protection of their interests when it becomes more important to do so fully by providing them an equal voice once the employer has contested the citation, and by preventing the employer and the Secretary from concluding an agreement prejudicial to the employees' interests without their participation. [App. 22a]

²² The invocation of prosecutorial discretion in an attempt to defeat Commission review of settlement agreements is particularly inappropriate with respect to the OSH Act because of the extent to which the Act limits such discretion. Under the Act, the Secretary is required to investigate a workplace if the union provides facts which establish reasonable cause to believe a violation exists, see 29 U.S.C. § 657(f), and the Secretary is required to prosecute if the Secretary's investigation establishes reason to believe that a violation exists, see, *id.* § 658(a). And when the Secretary issues a citation, the Act further limits the Secretary's prosecutorial authority by requiring that, in any hearing, a union must be afforded the opportunity "to participate as [a] part[y]," 29 U.S.C. § 659(c), thus depriving the Secretary of exclusive control over the presentation of the case to the Commission.

2. The courts that have ruled that the Commission may not review settlements also have placed great stress on the portion of the first sentence of § 10(c) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 659(c), which authorizes employee representatives to initiate cases before the Commission if—but only if—the representative “alleg[es] that the period of time fixed in the citation for the abatement of the violation is unreasonable.” The courts have concluded that this limitation on the range of issues that a union may on its own bring to the Commission necessarily limits the range of issues that a union may raise—or that the Commission may consider—in a challenge to a settlement.²³ Again, the reasoning is fallacious.

As the court below recognized, § 10(c) “establishes a two-tier scheme” for OSHRC cases (App. 14a). Under the first tier, cases are initiated by an employer’s notice of contest. For this tier—the tier in which the Secretary and the employer may attempt to resolve a case by settlement—the Act “contains no language limiting the employees’ participation” (*id.* 15a); to the contrary, the final sentence of § 10(c) provides without limitation that the employees shall be afforded “an opportunity to participate as parties” which usually means “to participate fully in litigation” (*see* p. 14, *supra*). Thus, as the court below stated “[i]f . . . the employer disputes the citation, the employees are provided an opportunity to have an equal voice in proceedings that might result in the modification or revocation of the citation.” App. 17a; *see also* *Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers v. OSHRC*, *supra*, 671 F.2d at 647-48; *Donovan v. Allied Industrial Workers*, *supra*, 11 BNA OSHC at 1746; *General Electric Co.*, 3 BNA OSHC 1031, 1038-39, 1048-49 (1975), *vacated in part on other grds*, 540 F.2d 167 (2d Cir. 1976).

The second tier of cases arises only if the employer does not contest any part of the citation (including the Secretary’s determination of a violation and his proposed pen-

²³ E.g., *Marshall v. Sun Petroleum Products Co.*, *supra*, 622 F.2d at 1186; *Donovan v. OSHRC*, *supra*, 713 F.2d at 928-29.

alty). In that event, the first sentence of § 10(c) is called into play and confers independent jurisdiction on the Commission to adjudicate employee-initiated contests if—but only if—the employees challenge the abatement date provided for in the citation.²⁴

A first-tier case such as this differs from a second-tier case in two key respects. First, in this case, the Commission already has obtained jurisdiction by virtue of the employer's notice of contest; the issue here is whether that admitted jurisdiction may continue to be exercised and not the question that § 10(c) addresses, whether to create Commission jurisdiction in the first instance. Second, the employer here has not acceded to the Secretary's citation but has negotiated a compromise of his dispute with the Secretary—a compromise in which the Secretary withdrew certain items from the citation, downgraded others, reduced the penalty, and accepted the employer's representation that abatement had occurred. See p. 3 *supra*. Such a compromise necessarily implicates interests of affected employees that are not implicated when an employer simply accedes to the Secretary's citation.

Given these differences, the congressional judgment embodied in the first sentence of § 10(c) has no relevance

²⁴ In *Mobil Oil Corp.*, *supra*, the Commission explained why, in its view, Congress chose to allow employee-initiated contests only with respect to abatement dates. The Commission stated:

Th[e] section of the statute authorizing the Secretary to issue citations makes no reference to abatement requirements or abatement plans, but refers only to the *time* for abatement of a violation. Similarly, section 10(c), in affording employees the right to file notices of contest with respect to abatement, uses parallel language concerning the period of time for abatement. Inasmuch as the manner for achieving abatement is not ordinarily set forth in the citation, it would be impossible for employees to file a notice of contest regarding the abatement method. As a result, it would be absurd for the Act to provide for employee notices of contest as to any aspect of abatement other than time, the only abatement factor required to be identified by section 9(a) of the Act. [10 BNA OSHC at 1919]

here; that section simply cannot be read as an indication of Congress' view as to how the Commission should exercise its jurisdiction, once that jurisdiction has attached, in a case in which the Secretary and employer have compromised disputed issues and in which the affected employees contend that that compromise does not comport with the Act.

Thus neither the language of the first sentence of § 10(c) nor broader concepts of prosecutorial discretion can negate the analytic conclusion of the court below: the Commission acted within its authority in promulgating Rule 100 and requiring that settlement of cases within its jurisdiction be submitted to it for its review. The court below thus erred in rejecting its own analysis in favor of the erroneous reasoning of other courts.²⁵

²⁵ The courts that have rejected the Commission's assertion of authority to review settlements have also invoked policy considerations, reasoning that Commission review will impede the Secretary's ability to settle cases and delay the implementation of settlement agreements. See *Donovan v. Allied Workers*, *supra*, 11 BNA OSHC at 1741-42; *Donovan v. OSHRC*, *supra*, 713 F.2d at 927. But these concerns—even assuming *arguendo* that they are properly considered at all given the statutory materials—are misplaced.

In the first place, there is no evidence to suggest that any of these feared evils have, in fact, materialized during the more than eight years in which the Commission's authority to review settlement agreements was unquestioned; to the contrary the Secretary succeeded in settling over 90% of all cases despite the existence of Commission review. See n.8 *supra*. Nor is there any logical basis to the fear that such review will impede the achievement or significantly delay the implementation of settlements. If a settlement plainly comports with the Act—and most undoubtedly do—little time or effort is required to establish that fact before the Commission; this no doubt explains why the prospect of Commission review has not deterred employers from entering into such settlements or significantly delayed their implementation. It is only if a substantial question exists as to whether a settlement is consistent with the Act—for example where, as petitioners maintain is the case here, the settlement fails to abate the hazard—that Commission review may become more time-consuming or costly. But in such cases the “costs” of review will be counterbalanced by the “benefits” that will be

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the petition for a writ of certiorari should be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN R. TADLOCK
General Counsel
OIL, CHEMICAL &
ATOMIC WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL
UNION
P. O. Box 2812
Denver, Colorado 80201

Of Counsel:

GEORGE H. COHEN
DAVID M. SILBERMAN
1000 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

LAURENCE GOLD
815 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 637-5390
(Counsel of Record)

realized in preventing a settlement from becoming final when the settlement fails to provide for adequate abatement or otherwise is inconsistent with the purposes of the Act. And in all events the availability of Commission review provides an important check on the Secretary and minimizes the risk that settlements will be negotiated that disserve the purposes of the Act.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FIFTH CIRCUIT

No. 83-4226 ¹

RAYMOND J. DONOVAN, SECRETARY OF LABOR,
Petitioner,
v.

OIL, CHEMICAL, AND ATOMIC WORKERS INTERNATIONAL
UNION AND ITS LOCAL 4-23,
Respondent.

Nov. 7, 1983

Petition for Review of an Order of the
Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission

Before RUBIN, TATE and JOLLY, Circuit Judges.

ALVIN B. RUBIN, Circuit Judge:

To further its purpose of assuring every working person "safe and healthful working conditions," Congress enacted the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, 29 U.S.C. § 651 *et seq.* (1970) (the Act). The Act provides for both an enforcement arm, under the Secretary of Labor, and an adjudicatory arm, under the Occupa-

¹ This case initially involved two appeals: No. 83-4142, in which the Secretary appealed the commission's order directing the parties to brief the issues accepted for review; and No. 83-4226, which is the Secretary's appeal from the Commission's denial of his motion to vacate its review order. At oral argument, counsel for the Secretary informed the court that No. 83-4142 had been withdrawn. Thus, only No. 83-4226 remains in this appeal.

tional Safety and Health Review Commission (the Commission) established by § 7(a)(1) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 656(a)(1). The Secretary is responsible for promulgating workplace safety standards, which he enforces by inspecting employers' premises and by issuing citations and proposed penalties for violations. Employers are entitled to contest a citation at a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge of the Commission.² The Commission, in its discretion, may then review the ALJ's order. The Act also accords employees³ certain rights to participate in both the enforcement and adjudicatory stages of the administrative process. In this case, we must determine whether the Act permits employees to challenge the terms of a settlement agreement struck between the Secretary and the employer, once the employer has withdrawn its contest to the citation.

I.

As a result of inspections conducted in the fall of 1979, the Secretary of Labor issued four citations and notifications of proposed penalties to American Petrofina Company (the Company) for violation of safety regulations promulgated by the Secretary. In response, the Company filed notices of contest to the citations, which are prerequisites for an administrative hearing.⁴ The citations

² Non-contested citations become final and unreviewable in any tribunal. See *infra* note 4 and accompanying text.

³ Because for present purposes the rights and duties of employees under the Act largely encompass those of their representatives, we use the term "employees" to include their representatives.

⁴ Section 659(a) provides that the citation and proposed assessment "shall be deemed a final order of the Commission and not subject to review by any court or agency" if, within fifteen days of receipt of the Secretary's notice, the employer fails to file a notice of contest or the employees do not file a subsection (c) notice. Subsection (b) contains a similar provision, without the reference to employees, for employers that receive notice from the Secretary that they have failed to correct a violation.

were consolidated into two cases and set for two separate hearings before two different ALJ's.⁵ After the employer had filed the notices of contest, but before each hearing, the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Worker's International Union and its Local 4-23 (the Union) exercised the employees' right under § 10(c) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 659(c), to participate as parties to the proceedings.⁶

⁵ The cases were designated OSHRC Docket No. 79-6847 and No. 80-1671. In No. 79-6847, citation 1, item 1, alleged that the company seriously violated § 5(a)(1), 29 U.S.C. § 654(a)(1), which requires employers to furnish employment "free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees," by hoisting materials over the heads of employees. Citation 1 also alleged the following serious violations of the Secretary's standards: (1) failure to clear debris (29 C.F.R. 1926.25(a)); (2) failure to protect employees against falls (29 C.F.R. 1926.28(a) and 1926.105(a)); (3) failure to guard an abrasive disk (29 C.F.R. 1926.303(b)); (4) failure to store oxygen cylinders properly (29 C.F.R. 1926.350(j)); (5) use of defective welding cable (29 C.F.R. 1926.351(b)(4)); and (6) failure to guard open-sided platforms (29 C.F.R. 1926.451(a)(4)). Citation 1, items 9a, 9b and 9c, alleged that the company seriously violated the asbestos standard by failing to conduct monitoring in the fluid catalytic cracking unit of employees who were removing asbestos insulation or working in areas where asbestos was being removed (29 C.F.R. 1910.1001(f)(1), .1001(f)(2)(1), .1001(f)(3)(i)). Citation 2 charged the company with two nonserious violations based on (1) failure to guard electrical equipment (29 C.F.R. 1926.400(a)), and (2) using defective ladders (29 C.F.R. 1926.450(a)(2)).

In No. 80-1671, Citation 1 alleged that the company violated 29 C.F.R. 1910.25(d)(1)(x) by using a defective ladder. Citation 2 alleged that the company seriously violated the asbestos standards in the fluid catalytic cracking unit by (1) failing to conduct initial monitoring (29 C.F.R. 1910.1001(f)(1)); (2) failing to collect representative samples (29 C.F.R. 1910.1001(f)(3)(i)); (3) failing to label asbestos-containing materials (29 C.F.R. 1910.1001(g)(2)(i)); and (4) failing properly to dispose of asbestos waste (29 C.F.R. 1910.1001(h)(2)).

⁶ Pursuant to § 10(c), 29 U.S.C. § 659(c), the Commission promulgated Rule 20, which provides: "Affected employees may elect to participate as parties at any time before the commencement of the hearing before the judge, unless, for good cause shown, the

Before the respective hearings, the Secretary and the Company agreed to settle both the cases. In return for a reduction of the citations from "serious" to "non-serious" and elimination of the penalties, the employer agreed to withdraw its notices of contest. The Union had participated in the negotiations, but refused to join the agreements on the grounds that their terms were inconsistent with the Act.⁷ After a hearing on the first citation, the ALJ rejected the Union's objections and approved the agreement. At the second hearing, another ALJ upheld the second agreement, and refused the Union's proffer of evidence purporting to show that certain asbestos-related violations were properly characterized as serious and that the Company had failed to take appropriate corrective measures when removing asbestos.

Undaunted, the Union next sought to invoke the Commission's discretionary authority to review the ALJ's rulings.⁸ The Commission granted the Union's petition, provoking the Secretary to file a motion to vacate the order for review. From the Commission's denial of his motion, the Secretary brings this appeal.

II.

The threshold issue is whether the Commission's denial of the Secretary's motion constitutes an appealable agency ruling. The judicial review provision of the Act allows "[a]ny person adversely affected or aggrieved by

Commission or the judge allows such election at a later time. See also § 2200.21. [Intervention: appearance by non-parties]" 29 C.F.R. § 2200.20 (1981).

⁷ Specifically, the Union objected in No. 79-6847 to reduction of the asbestos-related violations' reclassification from serious to non-serious and the agreement's statement that the violations had been abated. In the No. 80-1671 agreement, the Union disputed the terms that vacated asbestos-related violations and recharacterized the remaining asbestos-related violations as nonserious.

⁸ See 29 U.S.C. §§ 659(c) and 661(i).

an order of the Commission issued under subsection (c) of section 659 [§ 10(c) of the Act] of this title" to obtain review in the courts of appeals.⁹ Section 10(c) requires the Commission, if an employer contests a citation, to hold a hearing and "thereafter to issue an order, based on findings of fact, affirming, modifying, or vacating the Secretary's citation or proposed penalty, or directing other appropriate relief."¹⁰ Because the Commission's order denying the Secretary's motion did not affirm, modify, or vacate the Secretary's citation or proposed penalty or order any other relief, it is not final and ordinarily would not be appealable. See *Stripe-A-Zone v. OSHRC*, 643 F.2d 230, 232-33 (5th Cir. 1981).

The Secretary contends that the Commission's decision is nevertheless reviewable under the "collateral order" doctrine of *Cohen v. Beneficial Finance Industrial Corp.*, 337 U.S. 541, 545-47, 69 S.Ct. 1221, 1225-26, 93 L.Ed. 1528, 1535-37 (1949). "To come within the 'small class' of decisions excepted from the final-judgment rule by *Cohen*, the order must [1] conclusively determine the disputed question, [2] resolve an important question completely separate from the merits of the action, and [3] be effectively unreviewable on appeal from a final judgment." *Coopers & Lybrand v. Livesay*, 437 U.S. 463, 468, 98 S.Ct. 2454, 2458, 57 L.Ed.2d 351, 357 (1978) (footnote omitted). See also *Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital v. Mercury Construction Corp.*, — U.S. —, —, 103 S.Ct. 927, 935, 74 L.Ed.2d 765, 777 (1983).

The Second Circuit recently applied this test in a case remarkably similar to the present appeal, ruling that a Commission order remanding a proposed settlement agreement to the ALJ for consideration of the union's objections to the methods of abatement satisfied all three *Cohen* requirements. *Donovan and Mobil Oil Corp. v.*

⁹ 29 U.S.C. § 660(a).

¹⁰ See *infra* note 23 for a full quote of § 10(c). 29 U.S.C. § 659(c).

OSHRC and PTEU, 713 F.2d 918 (2d Cir. 1983) (*Mobil Oil*). Specifically, the court found that: the Commission's order conclusively determined the scope of the Secretary's authority to settle without Commission oversight or the employee's formal participation; the appeal presented an important question because it would resolve an impasse between two federal agencies, thus facilitating the Act's administration; and the issue of the Secretary's authority would not merge into a final judgment on the merits. *Id.* at 924-25. The third element of the *Cohen* test was more fully discussed by the Third Circuit in *Marshall and American Cyanamid v. OCAW and OSHRC*, 647 F.2d 383 (3d Cir. 1981) (*American Cyanamid*). The court reasoned that the Commission's order "irrevocably infringed" the Secretary's prosecutorial discretion because subsequent review of the final order would not have retroactive effect: the passage of time would obliterate the Secretary's negotiating position with the employer without accomplishing abatement. *Id.* at 387. *See also Marshall and IMC v. OSHRC*, 635 F.2d 544 (6th Cir. 1980) (*IMC*) (reviewing Commission order to remand case to allow employee representative to prosecute citation originally issued by the Secretary but subsequently withdrawn).

We reach the same result. Although the Commission has not yet issued a remand order, and therefore conceivably could approve the settlement, it has "conclusively determined" the disputed question. The Secretary is not arguing the validity of the settlement agreements on this appeal. Instead the issues here are the standing of the employees' representative to contest the agreement, and the Secretary's authority to conclude such an agreement shielded from review when the employer withdraws its notice of contest. By denying the Secretary's motion to vacate the review order, the Commission has, in effect, ruled on the issue of its jurisdiction to review settlement agreements and the proper scope of employee participa-

tion; those were the issues briefed by the Secretary in his motion to vacate the review order.

The Second Circuit's reasoning on the second prong of the *Cohen* test applies to the present case. In essence, the issues are identical and the need to settle them is evidenced by their recurrence in the various circuits. Additionally, because the arguments advanced by the parties in the present case are separable from the merits of the settlement agreement dispute, we need not consider the Union's objections to the agreements in ruling on this appeal.

Finally, we think *Cohen's* third requirement is satisfied. The complicated procedural history of this appeal presents a wrinkle not present in the cases discussed above. This case is a consolidation of two different hearings before the ALJ's, on two separate agreements that settled two distinct citations. At the first hearing, the ALJ considered the Union's objections and proffers of proof but, nevertheless, upheld the agreement; hence a remand is unlikely. In the second proceeding, on the other hand, the ALJ refused the Union's proffer of evidence. Should the Commission disapprove the agreements, therefore, it might remand for a hearing on the second agreement. In that event, this case would become like *American Cyanamid* and *IAM*, and the reasoning relied upon in those cases by the Third and Sixth Circuits would apply here. If, however, the Commission upheld the settlement agreements, then the issues here presented would escape review entirely because the Secretary could not appeal a victory.

This court's per curiam opinion in *Stripe-A-Zone v. OSHRC*, 643 F.2d 230 (5th Cir. 1981) does not control the disposition of this appeal. In *Stripe-A-Zone*, the employer appealed a Commission order vacating the ALJ's refusal to process a second citation based on essentially the same facts as one previously withdrawn by the Sec-

retary. The employer argued that its right not to be prosecuted twice for the same violation had been violated and therefore, although the Commission's order was not final, the appeal fit within the *Cohen* exception. We refused to accord *Stripe-A-Zone* the same absolute double jeopardy rights as a criminal defendant, and pointed out that the expense and trouble of litigation were simply part of the price of life under government. 643 F.2d at 233. Because *Stripe-A-Zone's* rights could be adequately protected by an appeal from a final Commission order, we ruled that it had failed to satisfy the third *Cohen* requirement. *Id.* at 234. By contrast, the Secretary is not merely seeking to avoid the annoyance of litigation—although his argument subsumes that objection; he is arguing that his statutory authority will be usurped and that the Commission will be exceeding its jurisdiction if the employees are allowed to obtain review of the settlement agreements before the Commission. *See Engelhard Industries v. OSHRC and Lcl. 962, ICUW*, 713 F.2d 45, 48 & n.4 (3d Cir. 1983) (refusing to apply *Cohen* doctrine to allow employer to seek review of OSHRC decision remanding case for hearing of factual issues raised by union's objections; distinguishing the Secretary's right to settle cases and hence to seek interlocutory appellate review of Commission orders interfering with that right, as necessary to the Act's enforcement.)

Moreover, uniformity in procedural rules has independent value for litigants should not be required to determine their federal procedural right by reference to the jurisprudence of the circuit having jurisdiction of the appeal. We conclude, therefore, that the collateral order doctrine applies to this case. Accordingly, we proceed to consider the merits.

III.

Simply stated, this appeal raises two questions: (A) what is the scope of employee participation bestowed by § 10(c) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 659(c); and (B) what is

the effect, if any, on those rights of an employer's withdrawal of its notice of contest? Because resolution of these issues requires us to interpret § 10(c) in light of its statutory context, a brief review of the Act will inform our discussion.

Congress placed primary responsibility for enforcement of the Act in the hands of the Secretary. *Dale M. Madden Construction, Inc. v. Hodgson*, 502 F.2d 278, 280 (9th Cir. 1974). He sets the standards for workplace safety,¹¹ enforces compliance by inspecting places of employment and by investigating reports of hazards, and prosecutes violations by issuing citations and proposing penalties to transgressing employers.¹² If the cited employer fails to file a notice of contest, the Secretary's citation and proposed penalty become final and unreviewable in any court.¹³ The Act implicitly authorizes the Secretary to compromise, mitigate, or settle.¹⁴ He has further authority to seek an injunction in federal district court when a practice or condition threatens to cause death or serious physical injury.¹⁵

Congress also has provided for employee participation in both the enforcement and adjudicatory stages of the

¹¹ 29 U.S.C. § 655(a). See also 29 U.S.C. § 655(b)(6) (authorizing the Secretary to grant a temporary variance from the standards he promulgates).

¹² 29 U.S.C. §§ 658(a) and 659(a) & (b).

¹³ See *supra* note 4.

¹⁴ Section 6(c) provides:

Whenever the Secretary promulgates any standard, makes any rule, order or decision, grants any exemption or extension of time, or compromises, mitigates, or settles any penalty assessed under this chapter, he shall include a statement of the reasons for such action, which shall be published in the Federal Register.

29 U.S.C. § 655(c). See *Dale M. Madden Construction, Inc. v. Hodgson*, 502 F.2d 278, 280 (9th Cir. 1974).

¹⁵ 29 U.S.C. § 662(a)-(c).

administrative process. Participation in the enforcement stage includes the right to accompany the Secretary when he inspects the workplace;¹⁶ and if the conditions present imminent danger of causing physical harm, the employee may request the Secretary to inspect.¹⁷ If the Secretary refuses to honor an employee request for an inspection, he must provide an informal hearing and explain his reason.¹⁸ Employees who believe that they have been discharged in retaliation for exercising their rights under the Act may file a complaint with the Secretary, who must bring an action in federal district court if a subsection has been violated.¹⁹ Finally, if the Secretary arbitrarily or capriciously fails to seek injunctive relief in the face of imminent danger of serious physical harm, any injured employee can bring a mandamus action in federal district court to compel him to do so.²⁰

The rights of employees at the adjudicatory stage are set forth in § 10(c), the interpretation of which lies at the heart of this appeal. The adjudicatory stage is governed by the Commission, which is an independent body responsible for appointing hearing officers, promulgating rules of procedure to govern hearings, and for reviewing orders of the hearing officers.²¹ The Commission also has authority to assess the civil penalties proposed by the Secretary.²²

¹⁶ 29 U.S.C. § 657(c).

¹⁷ 29 U.S.C. § 657(f).

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ 29 U.S.C. § 660(c) (1), (2).

²⁰ 29 U.S.C. § 662(d).

²¹ 29 U.S.C. § 661.

²² 29 U.S.C. § 666(i).

A.

The first part of this dispute concerns the interpretation of § 10(c). Section 10 of the Act, 29 U.S.S. § 659, is titled Enforcement Procedures. Subsection (c), the full text of which is set forth in the note,²³ permits an employer to notify the Secretary that he intends to contest a citation. It also permits any employee to contest the period of time fixed in the citation for abatement of the violation. In either event, the Commission must afford "an opportunity for a hearing." Finally, it requires the Commission to provide affected employees or their representatives "an opportunity to participate as parties to hearings under this subsection."

The parties agree that the subsection provides for two kinds of proceedings: one initiated by an employer's filing of a notice of contest, and one commenced by the employees' protest that the period set in the citation for

²³ (c) If an employer notifies the Secretary that he intends to contest a citation issued under section 658(a) of this title or notification issued under subsection (a) or (b) of this section, or if, within fifteen working days of the issuance of a citation under section 658(a) of this title, any employee or representative of employees files a notice with the Secretary alleging that the period of time fixed in the citation for the abatement of the violation is unreasonable, the Secretary shall immediately advise the Commission of such notification, and the Commission shall afford an opportunity for a hearing (in accordance with section 554 of Title 5 but without regard to subsection (a) (3) of such section). The Commission shall thereafter issue an order, based on findings of fact, affirming, modifying, or vacating the Secretary's citation or proposed penalty, or directing other appropriate relief, and such order shall become final thirty days after its issuance. Upon a showing by an employer of a good faith effort to comply with the abatement requirements of a citation, and that abatement has not been completed because of factors beyond his reasonable control, the Secretary, after an opportunity for a hearing as provided in this subsection, shall issue an order affirming or modifying the abatement requirements in such citation. The rules of procedure prescribed by the Commission shall provide affected employees or representatives of affected employees an opportunity to participate as parties to hearings under this subsection.

abatement of the violation is unreasonable.²⁴ The Secretary parts company with the Union and the Commission, however, on the extent of employee participation in the employer-initiated proceeding. The Secretary contends that employee participation is limited to challenging the reasonableness of the period for abatement of the violation in both kinds of proceedings.²⁵ The Union and the Commission read the statute to provide for plenary participation by employees in employer-initiated proceedings, but concede, as they must, that employees may not initiate proceedings for the purpose of objecting to anything other than the reasonableness of the abatement.

The circuits are divided on this question. The Second, Third, and Sixth favor the Secretary's position; the District of Columbia has followed the view urged by the Union and adopted by the Commission. In *Marshall and Lcl. 8-901 OCAW v. Sun Petroleum Products Co. and OSHRC*, 622 F.2d 1176, 1185-88 (3d Cir.), *cert. denied*, 449 U.S. 1061 S.Ct. 1061, 66 L.Ed.2d 604 (1980) (*Sun Petroleum*) and *American Cyanamid*, *supra*, 647 F.2d at 388, the Third Circuit read the specific provision conferring on employees the right to challenge reasonableness of the abatement period as limiting the more general directive to the Commission concerning employee

²⁴ See, e.g. *Marshall v. Sun Petroleum Products*, 622 F.2d 1176, 1185 (3d Cir.), *cert. denied*, 449 U.S. 1061, 101 S.Ct. 784, 66 L.Ed.2d 604 (1980).

²⁵ The Secretary has switched positions on this issue during the course of this appeal. In his brief, he conceded that "[i]n the hearing on an employer's contest of a citation, employees who elect party status are *not* limited in the interests they may assert to the length of the abatement period." Petitioner's brief at 28 (emphasis in original). Both at oral argument and in a supplemental brief filed in response to a question from the court on another issue, however, the Secretary maintained that employees' participation is limited in all cases to challenging the abatement period. As our disposition of the issue *infra* demonstrates, the Union has not been prejudiced by this reversal.

participation "as parties." To support its interpretation, the court quoted the Senate Committee Report, which states that § 10(c) "'gives an employee or representative of employees a right, whenever he believes that the period of time provided in a citation is unreasonably long, to challenge the citation on that ground'" 627 F.2d at 1186.²⁶ In *American Cyanamid*, the Third Circuit further noted that the Act provides other means by which employees can protect their interests. 647 F.2d at 388 (e.g., under § 657(f), employees may initiate the citation process by requesting the Secretary to inspect). Both the Second and Sixth Circuits interpreted § 10(c) in the context of the Act's overall structure. In *Mobil Oil*, *supra*, the Second Circuit described the Act as vesting broad rule-making, investigatory, and enforcement powers in the Secretary, but according employees a specific, narrow role in the enforcement process. 713 F.2d at 926-27.²⁷ See also *IMC*, *supra*, 635 F.2d 544, 551 (6th Cir. 1980) to the same effect. The Second Circuit reasoned that broader employee participation would inhibit the Secretary's ability expeditiously to effect the Act's

²⁶ Quoting Subcomm. on Labor of the Senate Comm. on Labor and Public Welfare, 92d Cong., 1st Sess., Legislative History of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 at 155 (emphasis added) [hereinafter cited as Legislative History].

²⁷ Specifically, the Second Circuit listed the following limitations on employee participation under OSHA:

[E]mployees do not have a private right of action. *Marshall v. OSHRC*, *supra*, 635 F.2d at 550-51 (citing *Taylor v. Brighton Corp.*, 616 F.2d 256 (6th Cir. 1980)). They may not compel the Secretary to adopt a particular standard. *OCAW v. OSHRC*, *supra*, 671 F.2d at 649 (citing *National Congress of Hispanic Am. Citizens v. Usery*, 554 F.2d 1196 (D.C. Cir. 1977)). As parties, they may not prosecute a citation once the Secretary decides to withdraw it, *Marshall v. OSHRC*, *supra*; nor may they continue an appeal of a Commission decision once the Secretary unconditionally asserts that he will not prosecute the citation regardless of the decision by the court of appeals, *OCAW v. OSHRC*, *supra*, 671 F.2d at 650-51.

remedial purposes because the Act stays all requirements to abate pending the Commission's final resolution of the proceedings.²⁸ 713 F.2d at 927.

The District of Columbia offered a different view of § 10(c) in *OCAW v. OSHRC*, 671 F.2d 643 (D.C.Cir. 1982), *cert. denied sub nom., American Cyanamid Co. v. OCAW*, — U.S. —, 103 S.Ct. 206, 74 L.Ed.2d 165 (1983). The court described the subsection as establishing a two-tier scheme: (1) employees may challenge the reasonableness of the abatement period at any time within fifteen days of the citation's issuance, or (2) employees may participate fully as parties *if* the employer contests the citation. *Id.* at 648. "The employees' request for party status," it said, "confers jurisdiction on the commission to entertain the employees' objections on all matters relating to the citation in question." *Id.* See also *Sun Petroleum Products, supra*, 622 F.2d at 188-93 (Pollack, J. dissenting) (same).

The D.C. Circuit read the same legislative history as supporting its contrary interpretation. It read the excerpt relied upon by those other circuits, when placed in context, to suggest that the drafters of the bill envisioned the two-tier approach adopted in *OCAW v. OSHRC*:

If the employer decides to contest a citation or notification, or proposed assessment of penalty, the Secretary must afford an opportunity for a formal hearing under the Administrative Procedure Act. Based upon the hearing record the Secretary shall issue an order confirming, denying, or modifying the citation, notification, or proposed penalty assessment. The procedural rules prescribed by the Secretary for the conduct of such hearings must make provision for affected employees or other representatives to *participate as parties*.

²⁸ See 29 U.S.C. § 659(b).

Section 10(c) *also* gives an employee or representative of employees a right, whenever he believes that the period of time provided in a citation for abatement of a violation is unreasonably long, to challenge the citation on that ground. Such challenges must be filed within 15 days of the issuance of the citation and an opportunity for a hearing must be provided in similar fashion to hearings when an employer contests. The employer is to be given an opportunity to participate as a party.

671 F.2d at 648.²⁹

We adopt the interpretation of the District of Columbia Circuit. "It is assumed Congress used words as they are commonly used and ordinarily understood." *Quarles v. St. Clair*, 711 F.2d 691 (5th Cir. 1980); *United States v. Porter*, 591 F.2d 1048, 1053 (5th Cir. 1977). The word "parties" usually connotes persons entitled to participate fully in litigation.³⁰ This view is buttressed by the more complete account of the legislative history quoted by the District of Columbia Circuit, which suggests that Congress contemplated two different applications of the "parties" provision. The ultimate sentence of the § 10(c) instructs the Commission to provide for employee participation "as parties to *hearings under this subsection*." The subsection, as we have seen, plainly envisions two kinds of hearings—employee-initiated and employer-initiated—and it contains no language limiting the employees' participation in the employer-initiated hearings to debate over the reasonableness of the abatement period. Although we have remarked that the "express allowance of one specific objection suggests a statutory intent to

²⁹ See Legislative History, *supra* note 26 at 154-55 (emphasis added).

³⁰ See, e.g., Webster's Third New International Dictionary 1648 ("party" as synonymous with "litigant").

foreclose at least some other objections," *Marshall v. B.W. Harrison Lumber Co.*, 569 F.2d 1303, 1307 (5th Cir. 1978), this aid to interpretation is not a stricture. We find the maximum of *inclusio unius* outweighed in the present case by the legislative history and our view of the Act's general purposes.

We do not disagree with those courts that have described the Act as vesting prosecutorial authority in the Secretary. See, e.g., *Mobil Oil*, 713 F.2d at 927. But focussing solely on the prosecution phase of the process misses the issue in this case. The Union's rights arise at the adjudicatory stage, the administration of which falls within the Commission's bailiwick cf. *Diamond Roofing v. OSHRC*, 528 F.2d 645, 648 n. 8 (5th Cir. 1976). Moreover, we understand Congress to have attempted to erect a comprehensive structure that would allow for meaningful participation of those most personally concerned with workplace safety—the workers. *OCAW v. OSHRC*, *supra*, 671 F.2d at 648. It is consistent with such a balanced scheme to limit the scope of employee participation at the investigatory and citation stages of the process, yet to provide plenary participation at the adjudicatory stage. Identification of violations of workplace safety standards is peculiarly within the expertise of the Secretary, hence greater deference is in order at that phase. Reliance on the Secretary's expertise becomes less important, however, once he has determined that the employer has violated the standards and has proposed a penalty.

The Secretary argues that such a scheme would produce the "anomalous" result of according greater rights to the employees in proceedings initiated by the employer than those initiated by the employees. This is the result but it is not irrational. It illustrates the fine balance struck by Congress. The Act requires the Secretary to issue a citation once he has determined that a violation exists.³¹

³¹ The Act provides that if the Secretary believes an employer has violated the Act or any standard promulgated under it, "he shall

It assumes that the Secretary will issue a citation in the appropriate circumstances and it provides a mechanism to check his arbitrary failure to do so when the consequences are sufficiently serious.³² Unless the citation is to be litigated, the Act confines the employees to challenging the one aspect of the citation of most immediate concern to them—how soon it will provide relief. If, however, the employer disputes the citation, the employees are provided an opportunity to have an equal voice in proceedings that might result in the modification or revocation of the citation.

Finally, we observe that the Commission has adopted the interpretation advocated by the Union.³³ We have said before that “[t]he Commission’s interpretation of OSHA’s provisions are entitled to deference where they are reasonable and consistent with the Act’s purposes.” *Central Georgia R.R. Co. v. OSHRC*, 576 F.2d 620, 624 (5th Cir. 1978).³⁴ More recently, however, we have qualified the truism that courts defer to agency interpretation by listing several factors that control the degree of that deference. *Quarles v. St. Clair*, 711 F.2d at 706-07. “These include: the consistency of the interpretation and the length of adherence to it, undisturbed by Congress; the explicitness of the congressional grant of authority to

with reasonable promptness issue a citation to the employer” 29 U.S.C. § 658(a) (emphasis added).

³² See *supra* note 20 and accompanying text.

³³ See *Mobil Oil Corp.* 1982 OSHD [CCH] ¶ 26,187 at p. 33,019, *rev’d sub nom. Donovan and Mobil Oil Corp. v. OSHRC and PTEU*, 713 F.2d 918 (2d Cir. 1983).

³⁴ See also *Marshall v. Kantson Construction Co.*, 566 F.2d 596, 600 (8th Cir. 1977); *Diamond Roofing v. OSHRC*, 528 F.2d 645, 648 n. 8 (5th Cir. 1976). Cf. *Florida Power & Light Co. v. FERC*, 660 F.2d 668 (5th Cir. 1981), *cert. denied sub nom., Fort Pierce Utilities Auth. v. FERC*, — U.S. —, 103 S.Ct. 800, 74 L.Ed.2d 1003 (1983); *Ford Motor Credit v. Milhollin*, 444 U.S. 555, 556, 100 S.Ct. 790, 792, 63 L.Ed.2d 22, 25 (1983).

the agency with greater deference in cases of more specific delegation; and the degree of agency expertise necessarily drawn upon in reaching its interpretation." *Id.*

Application of these factors to the present case yields a muddled picture. The Commission recently has reversed its position on its interpretation of § 10(c). See *Mobil Oil supra* at 33,028. On the other hand, Congress explicitly charged the Commission with responsibility for governing the procedures employed at the hearings. 29 U.S.C. § 659(c). But the question before us calls for little knowledge of workplace safety and, therefore, depends less heavily upon Commission expertise for its resolution. We conclude that the Commission's adoption of the Union's interpretation provides persuasive, but not controlling authority.

Balancing these considerations, we conclude that § 10(c) gives employees the right to participate as parties to employer-initiated proceedings. Because the Commission has not prescribed rules specifically governing the extent of this participation,²⁵ we are directed by § 12(g) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 661, to look to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The applicable rule is Rule 24(a), which covers intervention. An intervenor of right under Rule 24(a) "is treated as if he were an original party and has equal standing with the original parties." C. Wright & A. Miller, *Federal Practice and Procedure* § 1920 at 611 (1972). Cf. *Gilbert v. Johnson*, 601 F.2d 761, 768 (5th Cir. 1979) (Rubin, J., concurring), *cert. denied sub nom. Gilbert v. Cleland*, 445 U.S. 961, 100 S.Ct. 1647, 64 L.Ed. 2d 236 (1980). Thus, employees who elect to participate as parties after the employer files its notice of contest are entitled "to litigate fully" the merits of the citation and hence the terms of the settlement agreement. See C. Wright and A. Miller, *supra* at 612.

²⁵ See *Mobil Oil Corp.*, *supra* at 33,026.

B.

The final, and in this case dispositive, question is whether the employer's withdrawal of its notice of contest stripped the Union of its standing to challenge, and consequently divested the Commission of jurisdiction to review, the substance of the settlement agreement. The Secretary argues that, even under the D.C. Circuit's interpretation, the employees' rights are yoked to the status of the employer's participation: even if the notice of contest opens the door to plenary employee participation, once the employer withdraws its notice the door is slammed shut and the employees are relegated to challenging the reasonableness of the abatement period only.

Were we writing on a clean slate, we would be inclined to uphold the Union and Commission position, and to rule that an employee may seek review of the terms of a settlement agreement notwithstanding the employer's withdrawal of its notice of contest. Because the Commission has not promulgated rules concerning the employer's withdrawal of notice,³⁶ our analysis of §§ 10(c) and 12(g) leads us to this result.

The employee is in a position analogous to an intervenor in a civil lawsuit in which the original parties have settled or sought dismissal. The Secretary argues that, because an intervenor must have an independent jurisdictional basis for continuing the cause of action, apart from its status as intervenor after the original parties have resolved their dispute, the employees' action here must fail because the Act allows them independently to invoke the Commission's jurisdiction only to challenge the abatement period. Wright and Miller, however, describe the caselaw on when and whether an intervenor's claim can proceed to decision after dismissal of the original action as "scanty and unsatisfactory." C. Wright & A. Miller,

³⁶ *Id.*

supra, at 613. The Third Circuit has observed that "[t]he weight of authority in the United States Courts of Appeals supports the principle that an intervenor can continue to litigate after dismissal of the party who originated the action. *U.S. Steel v. EPA*, 614 F.2d 843, 845 (3d Cir. 1979), citing *Magdoff v. Saphin Television & Appliance, Inc.*, 228 F.2d 214 (5th Cir. 1955) and *Hunt Tool Co. v. Moore, Inc.*, 212 F.2d 685 (5th Cir. 1955).

In *U.S. Steel*, intervenor Scott Paper filed its motion to intervene in a petition for review of an EPA action well past the 60-day time limit (which the court seemed to regard as jurisdictional) for petitions to seek judicial review had expired. The original petitioner, U.S. Steel, however, had filed in time; hence Scott had filed its motion while the court had jurisdiction. Soon thereafter, U.S. Steel moved to dismiss its petition for review and EPA opposed Scott's continuation of the action. Because Scott filed its motion while the court had jurisdiction (it thus had not attempted to cure a jurisdictional defect by intervention), and because the intervention clearly was an effort to protect Scott's interests—which were similar but not identical to U.S. Steel's—the court upheld its right to continue the action.

Relying on *Ruotolo v. Ruotolo*, 572 F.2d 336 (1st Cir. 1978), the Secretary argues that an intervenor requires an independent jurisdictional basis for continuing the cause of action. In that case, the United States sought to appeal a district court's decision to allow a retired referee in bankruptcy, one Poulos, and his law firm to represent the Debtor in Possession in a Chapter XI proceeding. The creditor had withdrawn its motion objecting to Poulos's representation, and Poulos himself had withdrawn from any participation in the proceedings. The First Circuit ruled that the case failed to meet the case or controversy requirement of art. III, section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. Although the court did say that the case would be justi-

cialable only if the United States had standing to participate in the case in its own right apart from the creditor's motion, the court's subsequent analysis distinguishes that opinion from the present case. The court reasoned that, because the United States had no stake in the bankruptcy and sought to challenge only the legal issue of the retiree's participation while receiving retirement benefits, to allow the appeal would render the outcome an advisory opinion. *Id.* at 338.

In the present case, by contrast, the employees do have a stake in the terms of the settlement agreement; they are not seeking an advisory opinion from the Commission. Furthermore, under our view of § 10(c), the statute itself makes the employees full parties to the proceeding to enable them to protect their interests. Moreover, it would be inconsistent with that view to permit the employer to reach an *ex parte* agreement with the Secretary. Therefore, we regard the present case as more like *U.S. Steel*.⁸⁷

The statutory language is susceptible of either construction, and either result can be viewed as part of a coherent statutory scheme. The Secretary's interpretation, even after taking into account our ruling in the previous section, is logical if § 10(c) is regarded as granting conditional intervenor status to the employees, the condition being the continued participation of the employer. *Cf.* *C. Wright & A. Miller, supra*, at 611 (discussing conditional intervention). Such status makes sense if the employees' role is viewed, as the Secretary has suggested it ought to be, as that of a "gadfly." *Cf. NLRB v. OCAW*, 476 F.2d 1031, 1036 (1st Cir. 1973). The interpretation

⁸⁷ Here, as in *U.S. Steel*, the intervenor could not have joined the action had the original party not invoked the tribunal's jurisdiction, but the Secretary does not contend, nor could he, that the Union's election of party status was an attempt to cure a jurisdictional defect. At that time, the employer had not yet withdrawn its notice of contest; the Commission, therefore, had jurisdiction to hear the employee's objections under our ruling in Part III.B., *supra*.

that we are inclined to favor also appears sound if § 10 (c) is regarded as designed to accommodate the employees' legitimate interest in ensuring workplace safety. By conditioning their full participation on the employer's filing of a notice of contest, the Act can be seen as striking a balance between expeditious prosecution of citations (allowing uncontested ones to become final and limiting the employees' participation to challenging the abatement period only) and the employees' protection of their interests when it becomes more important to do so fully by providing them an equal voice once the employer has contested the citation, and by preventing the employer and the Secretary from concluding an agreement prejudicial to the employees' interests without their participation.

Although, as we have observed above, we traditionally defer to an agency's construction of the statute that it is charged to administer, we will decline to do so in the face of compelling reasons to the contrary.²² As our foregoing discussion indicates, we believe that the Commission's interpretation, here advocated by the Union, is reasonable and consistent with a coherent view of the statute.

Nevertheless, we feel constrained to adopt the Secretary's interpretation because we find a compelling reason to do so in the unanimity of the authorities behind the Secretary's position. The decisions of the Second, Third, and Sixth Circuits limiting employee participation to challenges to the abatement period in all cases *a fortiori* do not permit full employee participation once the employer has withdrawn its notice of contest pursuant to a settlement. And the D.C. Circuit, in a dictum, has agreed expressly with the Secretary. *OCAW v. OSHRC*, 671 F.2d at 650 n. 7. The Second Circuit, discussing this very issue in *Mobil Oil*, summed up the arguments supporting its position: "Continuation of the commission's proceedings after an employer had agreed to withdraw his notice

²² *Florida Power & Light Co. v. FERC*, *supra*, 660 F.2d 668, 679.

of contest so that an employees' representative or an employee may present objections to a settlement agreement not only puts off the day when abatement should finally occur, but also prevents the Secretary from taking any steps to compel abatement. . . . Moreover, employers would only be discouraged from entering settlement negotiations with the Secretary if they knew further proceedings before the commission could be required." 713 F.2d at 927. Thus, in the Second Circuit's view, the Union's position would produce an unworkable result: the Secretary would be unduly hampered in his ability to enforce the Act. That this is no small consideration is evidenced by the Secretary's assertion that roughly nine out of every ten cases are settled prior to a hearing. Petitioner's Supplement Brief at 2.³⁹

In an administrative territory as vast as is OSHA, the need for uniformity is apparent. Were we to march to the beat of our own drummer, a gross disparity would arise between the Secretary's ability to settle cases in this circuit and his ability to do so elsewhere. Therefore, rather than profess telepathy from the collective mind of the 1970 Congress, we acknowledge that the Act can reasonably be interpreted more than one way, and we adopt a course that at least will not precipitate administrative chaos.

For the above reasons, we hold that employees may participate fully as parties once the employer has filed a notice of contest, and hence are not limited to challenging the reasonableness of the abatement period at such a proceeding. If the employer subsequently withdraws its notice of contest, however, the employees are limited to

³⁹ We do not disagree with the Second Circuit that the Secretary might find settlement less easily achieved under the Union's interpretation. Rather, our perspective on the Act recognizes a statutory purpose to accord the employees a greater role at the adjudicatory stage (marked by the employer's notice of contest) and thus to balance competing interests.

challenging the abatement period;⁴⁰ and the Commission loses jurisdiction to entertain the employees' petition for review of the settlement agreement's terms. For the foregoing reasons, the order of the Commission denying the Secretary's motion to vacate the review order is VACATED, and the case REMANDED for the Commission to dismiss the petition.

E. GRADY JOLLY, Circuit Judge, concurring in part and dissenting in part:

I concur in the result.

I agree with Part II that the order appealed from is reviewable.

I disagree with and dissent from the conclusion of Part III A that the union in this case may challenge the citation on grounds other than the reasonable length of the abatement. The Second Circuit's reasoning in *Donovan v. OSHRC*, 713 F.2d 918 (2d Cir. 1983) is sounder, more persuasive and truer to the statutory scheme than the majority opinion here. Furthermore, it is wholly unnecessary to discuss or reach the issue here since it is not determinative of the outcome of the case. Whether, therefore, Part III A is dicta is a matter over which parties and courts may later argue.

Finally, I agree with the result reached in Part III B but not in its belief that the more plausible view of the issue there presented is that a union may seek review of the terms of a settlement agreement notwithstanding the employer's withdrawal of the notice of contest.

⁴⁰ We note but do not decide, that this holding may raise issues of timeliness under § 10(a) and (b) if the employer withdraws its notice of contest after the time period for filing employee-initiated contests has expired. The Third Circuit has said that the employer's notice tolls the time period. *Sun Products supra* 622 F.2d 1176, 1185-86.

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APPENDIX B

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND
HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

1825 K Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20006

March 25, 1983

OSHRC Docket No. 79-6847 and 80-1671

IN REFERENCE TO SECRETARY OF LABOR

v.

AMERICAN PETROFINA COMPANY OF TEXAS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO THE FOLLOWING:

Harold J. Engel, Esq.
Counsel for Regional Trial Litigation
Office of the Solicitor, USDOL
200 Constitution Ave., NW—Rm. S4004
Washington, D.C. 20210

James E. White
Reg. Sol., USDOL
555 Griffin Square Bldg., Suite 501
Griffin and Young Sts.
Dallas, Texas 75202

Bennett W. Cervin, Esq.
Thompson & Knight
2300 Republic National Bank Building
Dallas, Texas 75201

Dan C. Edwards, Director
Health and Safety Department
OCAWIU
Box 2812
Denver, CO. 80201

Stanley M. Schwartz
Judge, OSHRC
Room 7B11, Federal Building
1100 Commerce Street
Dallas, Texas 75242

OF ORDER

To wit: The Authorized Employee Representative's Request for Extension of Time to File Brief until March 20, 1983, is Granted.

The Secretary's and Respondent's Motions to Vacate the Commission's Direction for Review are Denied.

The Secretary's Motion for Stay of Proceedings Pending Completion of Appellate Review is Denied.

FOR THE COMMISSION

/s/ Ray H. Darling, Jr.
RAY H. DARLING, JR.
Executive Secretary

APPENDIX C

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND
HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

OSHRC Docket No. 80-1671

SECRETARY OF LABOR,
Complainant,
v.

AMERICAN PETROFINA COMPANY OF TEXAS,
Respondent.

OIL, CHEMICAL AND ATOMIC WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL UNION AND ITS LOCAL 4-23,
*Authorized Employee
Representative.*

DIRECTION FOR REVIEW

The petition for discretionary review filed by the Authorized Employee Representative is GRANTED under 29 U.S.C. § 661(i) and Commission Rule 92(a), 29 C.F.R. § 2200.92(a). Review is directed on all issues raised by the petition including the following:

1. Whether the judge failed to provide the Authorized Employee Representative an adequate opportunity to be heard on the proposed settlement agreement.
2. Whether the judge erred in approving the settlement agreement as consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act without a factual inquiry into the Authorized Employee Representative's claims that:

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- a. the Respondent had failed to abate the cited conditions involving employee exposure to asbestos, until the work involved was completed, and
- b. the Respondent had failed to correct similar conditions at the same refinery up to the time of the hearing.

/s/ Bertram Roberts Cottine
BERTRAM ROBERT COTTINE
Commissioner

Dated: 11 May 1981

APPENDIX D

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND
HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

OSHRC Docket No. 79-6847

SECRETARY OF LABOR,
Complainant,

v.

AMERICAN PETROFINA COMPANY OF TEXAS,
Respondent.

OIL, CHEMICAL AND ATOMIC WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL UNION AND ITS LOCAL 4-23,
*Authorized Employee
Representative.*

DIRECTION FOR REVIEW

The petition for discretionary review filed by the authorized employee representative is GRANTED IN PART under 29 U.S.C. 661(i) and Commission Rule 92(a), 29 C.F.R. § 2200.92(a). Review is limited under this direction for review to the following issues:

1. Whether the judge erred in approving the settlement agreement filed by the Secretary and the Respondent without granting the authorized employee representative's request for "other appropriate relief" under section 10(c) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 654(c), in the form of an order directing the Respondent to comply with all provisions of 29 C.F.R. § 1910.1001 at all locations in its Port Arthur refinery.

2. Whether the judge erred in failing to find that the Respondent's notice of contest was not filed in good faith within the meaning of section 10(b) of the Act, 29 U.S.C. § 659(b).

/s/ Bertram Robert Cottine
BERTRAM ROBERT COTTINE
Commissioner

Dated: 21 August 1981

APPENDIX E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND
HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

OSHRC Docket No. 80-1671

SECRETARY OF LABOR,
Complainant,
v.

AMERICAN PETROFINA COMPANY OF TEXAS,
Respondent.

OIL, CHEMICAL AND ATOMIC WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL UNION AND ITS LOCAL 4-23,
*Authorized Employee
Representative.*

APPEARANCES:

BOBBIE J. GANNAWAY, Esquire, U.S. Department
of Labor, Office of the Solicitor, 555 Griffin Square
Building, Dallas, Texas
For the Complainant

BENNETT W. CERVIN, Esquire, Thompson and
Knight, 2300 Republic National Bank Building, Dal-
las, Texas
For the Respondent

STEVEN WODKA, Esquire, Oil, Chemical and
Atomic Workers International Union, 1120 19th
Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
For the Employees

DECISION

Between November 6 and November 21, 1979, a repre-
sentative of the Occupational Safety and Health Admin-

istration (OSHA) inspected a portion of respondent's refinery in Port Arthur, Texas. On March 3, 1980, OSHA issued two citations and notifications of penalty as a result of the inspection. Citation 1 alleges that respondent violated an occupational safety and health standard promulgated by complainant under the provisions of section 5(a)(2) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, 29 USC 651 *et seq.*, (hereinafter the "Act"), that this violation is other than serious in nature and proposes no penalty. Citation 2, items 1a through 1d, allege that respondent violated four standards, and that the alleged violations are serious in nature. A \$900.00 penalty is proposed for these alleged violations. Both of the citations required immediate abatement of the violations.

Respondent duly contested the issuance of the citations, the proposed abatement dates, and the proposed penalty. In due course the authorized employee representative (the "union") elected and was granted party status under Rule 20 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure.

Settlement discussions ensued between the parties, and on November 13, 1980, complainant and respondent executed exhibit R-1, a settlement agreement which purportedly disposes of all the issues in question. The union did not agree with the terms of the settlement and did not execute the settlement. The union's objections were heard on November 14, 1980, and the parties have filed post-hearing briefs.

Rule 100 of the Rules of Procedure states, in section (a) thereof, that a settlement proposal shall be approved when it is consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act. Section (b) provides that every settlement proposal submitted for approval shall include, where applicable:

- (1) A motion to amend or withdraw a citation, notification of proposed penalty, notice of contest, or petition for modification of abatement;

(2) A statement that payment of the penalty has been tendered or a statement of a promise to pay; and

(3) A statement that the cited condition has been abated or a statement of the date by which abatement will be accomplished.

Complainant and respondent contend that the settlement agreement complies with the requirements of Rule 100 and, consequently, should be approved. The union contends that the settlement should not be approved, since it is not consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act. Complainant and respondent counter by stating that the union has standing to object to the settlement only as to abatement provisions and that, as stated in the settlement and agreed to by the parties, the alleged violations have been abated. Accordingly, the union has no standing to object to the provisions of the settlement agreement.

In the settlement agreement complainant withdraws items 1a and 1b of citation 1. It is apparent from the recitation of the standards involved in these items and from the comments of the parties at the hearing that the reference to citation 1 is a typographical error, and that complainant is actually withdrawing items 1a and 1b of citation 2. Complainant also amends the characterization of items 1c and 1d of citation 2 from serious to non-serious violations. Complainant also reduces the proposed total penalty from \$900.00 to no penalty. Respondent withdraws its notice of contest and represents that the alleged violations have been abated. Respondent agrees that the citations, as amended, shall become a final order of the Commission.

It can be seen that the settlement contains, where applicable, motions to amend and withdraw items of citation 2, notifications of proposed penalty, and notice of contest. Since no penalty is proposed in the amended

citations it is obviously not necessary that the settlement contain a statement that payment of the penalty has been tendered or a statement of a promise to pay the penalty. The settlement does contain a statement that the cited conditions have been abated. All of the requirements which are applicable as set forth in Rule 100(b) have been met. Approval of the settlement then depends only on whether or not it is consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act.

Section 2(b) of the Act stated that its purpose is "to assure so far as possible every working man and woman in the Nation safe and healthful working conditions and to preserve our human resources." In order to attain these objectives the Act, in various sections, authorizes promulgation of occupational safety and health standards, inspection and investigation of workplaces, issuance of citations for alleged violations of the Act or standards, and determination by the Commission in the event of a contest of a citation or notification of penalty.

Section (10) (a) of the Act authorizes an employer to "contest the citation or proposed assessment of penalty." Section (10) (c) authorizes an employee or representative of employees to file a notice with the Secretary "alleging that the period of time fixed in the citation for abatement of the violation is unreasonable." The contest under Section (10) (a) and the employee notification under section (10) (c) must be filed within 15 working days of the issuance of a citation. In either event the Commission shall afford an opportunity for a hearing. Section (10) (c) also states that the Commission's Rules of Procedure shall provide affected employees or representatives thereof an opportunity to participate as parties to any such hearings. Accordingly, Rule 20(a) of the Commission's Rules of Procedure provides for election by affected employees to participate as parties at any time before the commencement of the hearing, or at a later time for a good cause shown.

It is immediately apparent from the recitation of the above sections of the Act that, whereas the employer can contest the citation or proposed assessment of penalty, the employee or employee representative's basis for contest is restricted to an allegation that the period of time fixed for abatement of the violation is unreasonable. Viewed in this light the union here has no standing to object to the provisions of the settlement. The citations called for immediate abatement. The settlement states that the violative conditions have been abated, and the parties all agreed at the hearing that since the job in question has been completed, the conditions have been abated. Since there is no abatement question, the union has no standing to object to the settlement. Complainant and respondent have agreed on the terms of the settlement, the union has no standing to object thereto and, consequently, it should be approved.

Another question to be determined is whether or not the union has had an opportunity for meaningful participation in the settlement process. An authorized employee representative that has elected party status must be afforded an opportunity for meaningful participation in any settlement. It must either agree to the settlement or be afforded an opportunity to participate in the settlement negotiations. *ASARCO, Inc.*, — OSAHRC —, 8 BNA OSHC 2200, 1980 CCH OSHD ¶ 24,913 (No. 79-5557, 1980). The union did not agree to the settlement, but the record does reflect meaningful participation by the union in settlement negotiations. As stated by counsel for complainant and tacitly agreed to by the union's representative, ongoing discussions were held at great length with the union representative, and a conference meeting was held between all parties at which settlement matters were discussed in detail. Complainant's representative listened very carefully and gave serious consideration to the views and arguments of the union representative before entering into the settlement agreement.

over his objections. This certainly indicates meaningful participation by the union in the settlement process and fulfills the requirement set forth in *ASARCO*.

The last matter to be determined is whether or not the settlement is consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act, as required by Rule 100(a). The principal purpose of the Act is to obtain a safe and healthful workplace for employees through effectuation of the procedures and enforcement provided in the Act. Approval of the settlement herein will constitute a finding and a final order that respondent has violated the Act as alleged in the particular items in question. Abatement of the violative conditions has occurred. Although no monetary penalty is assessed, respondent has been penalized in the sense that another such violation in the future can result in citations for repeated or willful violations. This certainly provides an incentive for respondent to make every effort to comply with the Act in the future, as recognized by respondent in the settlement agreement. On balance the agreement is consistent with the provisions and objections of the Act as required by Rule 100(a) and should be approved.

Since the authorized employee representative has had an opportunity to meaningfully participate in the settlement process, and since the settlement meets all of the criteria specified in Rule 100 of the Rules of Procedure it should be and is hereby approved.

/s/ F. Daley Abels
F. DALEY ABELS
Judge, OSHRC

Dated: April 9, 1981

APPENDIX F

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND
HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

OSHRC Docket No. 79-6847

SECRETARY OF LABOR,
Complainant,
v.

AMERICAN PETROFINA COMPANY OF TEXAS,
Respondent.

OIL, CHEMICAL AND ATOMIC WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL UNION AND ITS LOCAL 4-23,
*Authorized Employee
Representative.*

Appearances:

E. Justin Pennington, Esq.
Dallas, Texas
For the Complainant.

Bennett W. Cervin, Esq.
Kris L. Terry, Esq.
Dallas, Texas
For the Respondent.

Mr. Steve Wodka
Washington, D.C.
For the Union.

DECISION AND ORDER

SCHWARTZ, Judge:

This matter involves the question of whether a proposed settlement agreement between the Secretary of

Labor and American Petrofina Company should be approved. The Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Worker's International Union, hereinafter "the Union" objects to specific provisions of the agreement. The facts are undisputed.

On January 15, 1981, the Secretary and Respondent filed the subject settlement agreement and a joint motion to affirm. They indicated the Union, which had elected party status, declined to participate in the agreement. Next, the Union filed two objections. It objected to the proposed reduction of items 9(a), 9(b), and 9(c) of the agreement from a serious violation to a non-serious violation. The Union also contended that abatement of the conditions listed in terms 9(a), 9(b) and 9(c) had not occurred in the true and real sense of the word.

The undersigned scheduled a limited evidentiary hearing on these objections. Subsequently the Union filed a discovery request and a motion to compel discovery. By order dated March 6, 1981, I denied the discovery of any documents concerning the proposed reduction of the classification of the violation. A prehearing conference was conducted by telephone to discuss my March 6, 1981 order and the scope of the evidentiary hearing. I ruled that the Union could present testimony on the issue of abatement of the subject items. I indicated that an offer of proof would be accepted on the classification of the violations since I had ruled the Union lacked standing, as a matter of law, to object on that basis.

The items of the citation, in issue provide as follows:

9(a)

29 CFR 1910.1001(f)(1): Initial monitoring was not conducted in such a manner to determine whether every employee's exposure to airborne asbestos fibers is below the prescribed limits:

(a) in the FCCU, no monitoring was conducted for employees who were removing asbestos insulation or for employees who were working in the areas

where asbestos was being removed or was laying about the workplace loose.

9(b)

29 CFR 1910.1001(f)(2)(i): Proper samples were not collected from the breathing zones of employees when determining exposure to airborne asbestos fibers:

(a) in the FCCU no monitoring was conducted to determine exposure to employees removing asbestos insulation or to employees working in those areas where asbestos was in evidence.

9(c)

29 CFR 1910.1001(f)(3)(i): Samples were not collected from areas of a work environment which were representative of the airborne concentrations of asbestos fibers which may reach the breathing zone of employees:

(a) in the FCCU, no monitoring was conducted for employees who were removing asbestos insulation or for employees who were working in the areas where asbestos was being removed or was laying about the workplace loose.

The hearing was held on March 20, 1981, in Port Arthur, Texas. The Union's offer of proof was tendered and accepted. The parties were then given the opportunity to present evidence and argument concerning whether items 9(a), 9(b) and 9(c) had been abated as set forth in the settlement agreement dated November 13, 1980.

The hearing established that American Petrofina undertook a large construction project including the FCCU area at its Port Arthur Refinery during the summer of 1979. It hired a prime contractor to supervise the construction work some of which was in turn subcontracted

out. OSHA inspected the worksite in the fall of 1979. Respondent was cited for a number of items including items 9(a), 9(b), and 9(c) which related to monitoring for asbestos. The Union presented Mr. John Michael Breaux who testified Respondent has conducted asbestos removal operations since the settlement agreement was executed in November 1980. He referred to a job concerning the VB unit of the refinery. Respondent acknowledged at the hearing and in its brief that other construction projects may and likely will be carried out at the refinery in the future as technological needs demand, utilizing contractors and subcontractors it cannot now identify.

OPINION

Sun Petroleum Products Co.

Complainant and the Respondent both argue that the Commission has the jurisdiction to review a settlement agreement only for the limited purpose of entertaining objections from the employee or employee's representative that the abatement period proposed by the settlement is unreasonable. They rely on the decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in *Marshall v. Sun Petroleum Products Co. and OSHRC*, Docket Nos. 79-1822 and 79-1828 (3rd Cir. May 29, 1980), 622 F.2d 1176. This position must be rejected. The Commission has respectfully declined to follow the holding in *Sun Petroleum*. See *Farmers Export Company*, 80 OSAHRC —, 8 BNA OSHC 1655, 1980 CCH OSHD ¶ 24,569 (No. 78-1708, 1980).

CLASSIFICATION OF THE VIOLATION

Complainant and Respondent have agreed to reduce items 9(a), 9(b), and 9(c) from serious to non-serious. The Union disagrees with the reduction and desires to litigate this issue independent of the Secretary. It believes a serious violation exists and that the reduction

fails to promote future compliance or abatement of the violation.

The undersigned believes that the classification of a violation is essentially subjective in nature. It comes within the prosecutorial discretion placed in the Secretary under the provisions of the Act. He has evaluated the facts and circumstances of this case and determined that a non-serious violation is appropriate. In my view, he has served the public interest, employees included, by insuring that a final order may be entered as to a non-serious violation. Respondent must abate the violations and the Secretary's reinspection rights are clearly spelled out in the agreement.

I find that this case does not warrant separate prosecution by affected employees. This procedure may be appropriate in a case where the Secretary withdraws a citation and abatement is not required. These facts may lead to rejection of a settlement agreement and continuance of the prosecution by employees. The Secretary and employees may have separate interests to be served. However, the reduction from serious to non-serious cannot be said to be contrary to the statutory purpose of assuring a safe and healthful work place. This purpose is best served, as here, by a prompt voluntary disposition of the case resulting in a final order of the Commission.

ABATEMENT

The Union has called into question whether abatement of items 9(a), 9(b), and 9(c) has occurred. It argues that contrary to the representations in the settlement agreement abatement has not occurred. I therefore must determine whether abatement of items 9(a), 9(b), and 9(c) has occurred. *American Cyanamid Co.*, 80 OSAHRC — 8 BNA OSHC 1346, 1980 CCH OSHD ¶ 24,424 (No. 77-3752, 1980) *Pet. for Review Filed*, No. 80-1942 (3rd Cir. June 26, 1980).

The Union acknowledges that the overhaul of the FCCU was completed by December 1979 (Union brief p. 4). It argues that the Commission should reject the settlement agreement as written and enter an order directing the employer to abate by adhering to all the provisions of 29 C.F.R. 1910.1001 at all locations in the Port Arthur refinery when asbestos insulation is removed. It argues that Respondent has not taken any positive steps to abate the hazard but merely contested the Complainant's citation and calculated that the overhaul project would be completed long before a hearing was held or the case was settled.

Respondent contends that specific abatement of the violation has occurred. The project has been completed and thus the particular conditions and practices set forth in items 9(a) (b) and (c) have ceased to exist. It argues that the Union's theory of requiring the company to institute a plant wide program to insure that the violations will not occur in the future on a different construction project at the same site is both unworkable and outside the scope of the Act.

I find that Respondent has abated the conditions cited in items 9(a), 9(b), and 9(c) as represented in the settlement agreement. Completion of the construction activity which gave rise to the violations constituted abatement for purposes of the Act. My reasons follow:

The purpose of the subject citation is to achieve correction of the conditions set forth therein. The Secretary's Field Operations Manual (FOM) recognizes that conditions change rapidly on a construction site and provides for short abatement times. The project involved here is analogous to construction work which has a beginning and an ending of the operation. The overhaul of the FCCU was completed in December 1979. The FOM also distinguishes between Repeat and Failure to Correct situations by providing as follows:

Repeated violations are also to be distinguished from a failure to correct. If upon inspection, a violation does not involve the same piece of equipment or the same location within an establishment or work site, the violation may be a repeated one (FOM Chp. VIII B4(C)).

These guidelines do not have the full force and effect of law. However they are reasonable and distinguish between two separate and distinct enforcement problems. The Union's suggested policy of requiring plant wide abatement would essentially negate the Repeat violation provisions of the Act. The failure to correct violations would erode the Repeat violations, where as here, a particular construction project or area of work has been completed. The logical extension would be that an employer who received a housekeeping violation on the first floor of a high rise building project would be subject to a failure to correct citation for a similar violation on the thirtieth floor of the project.

The undersigned Judge believes that the Commission intended its role to be a limited one when considering settlement agreements. The determination of whether abatement has occurred is essentially factual. It is well defined concerning whether a guard has been placed on a machine. Where as here, the Respondent has completed the specific work the Commission must consider this as abatement of the subject conditions. It then becomes a matter of enforcement policy for the Secretary of Labor to ensure that any future violations are pursued through the provisions of the Act. These include the issuance of a Willful citation, Repeat citation, higher penalties, and/or possible criminal prosecution of the Respondent for future non-compliance with these particular standards. The undersigned does not feel that Congress intended the Commission to circumvent these provisions by the rejection of settlement agreements and the requirement of plant wide and/or construction site

wide abatement orders under circumstances as presented in this case.

I have noted Respondent's position that it has purposefully chosen not to go into the merits of this settled case. It has chosen not to present evidence as to the specific measures it has taken both before and after the inspection to assure compliance with applicable asbestos standards. Rather, it has relied and prevailed on the fact that the construction work in question was completely finished.

The undersigned Judge has also considered the Union's belief that this case does not lend itself to even the possibility of control under normal OSHA enforcement procedures. Mr. Wodka has presented clearly the Union's position and obvious concern in this case. However, I disagree with him on this point.

The Secretary has stated that the agreement should be affirmed as a final order of the Commission so that all the parties can proceed in manners authorized in the Act. I agree. However it is extremely important that the Secretary follow through on a case such as this. Once the citation becomes a final order of the Commission this case should be flagged by both the Area Director and the Regional Solicitor. The Union should and, I am sure will, continue to closely monitor this situation. The complaint procedures of the Act are tailor made for a case such as this. The Secretary, upon receipt of a complaint can make an expedited inspection and determine whether a citation should be issued. He can then determine the nature of the prosecution, if any, to conduct. Respondent recognizes that these procedures, (complaint) can be used and has reserved putting on evidence at the time. In addition an expedited hearing can be conducted by the Commission.

The Union considers this piecemeal non-effective enforcement of the OSHA asbestos standard. However I

find the enforcement scheme best protects due process of all the parties. It is a system of checks and balances and participation by all parties to achieve safety in the workplace. The provisions concerning Willful, Repeat, and criminal penalties should be utilized to deter future violations of the same standards as intended by Congress. Rejection of the settlement agreement in this case would not achieve the goals of the Act and would be contrary to the statutory scheme set forth for enforcement of the Act and its regulations.

Consequently, the reasons stated above, the settlement agreement is approved. The objections of the Union are overruled.

/s/ Stanley M. Schwartz
STANLEY M. SCHWARTZ
Administrative Law Judge

Dated: July 22, 1981

APPENDIX G

STATUTES AND REGULATIONS INVOLVED

1. Section 9(a) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, 29 U.S.C. § 658, provides as follows:

(a) If, upon inspection or investigation, the Secretary or his authorized representative believes that an employer has violated a requirement of section 654 of this title, of any standard, rule or order promulgated pursuant to section 655 of this title, or of any regulations prescribed pursuant to this chapter, he shall with reasonable promptness issue a citation to the employer. Each citation shall be in writing and shall describe with particularity the nature of the violation, including a reference to the provision of the chapter, standard, rule, regulation, or order alleged to have been violated. In addition, the citation shall fix a reasonable time for the abatement of the violation. The Secretary may prescribe procedures for the issuance of a notice in lieu of a citation with respect to de minimis violations which have no direct or immediate relationship to safety or health.

* * * *

2. Section 10(a), (c) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, 29 U.S.C. § 659, provides as follows:

(a) If, after an inspection or investigation, the Secretary issues a citation under section 658(a) of this title, he shall, within a reasonable time after the termination of such inspection or investigation, notify the employer by certified mail of the penalty, if any, proposed to be assessed under section 666 of this title and that the employer has fifteen working days within which to notify the Secretary that he wishes to contest the citation or proposed assessment of penalty. If, within fifteen working days from the receipt of the notice issued by the Secretary the

employer fails to notify the Secretary that he intends to contest the citation or proposed assessment of penalty, and no notice is filed by an employee or representative of employees under subsection (c) of this section within such time, the citation and the assessment, as proposed, shall be deemed a final order of the Commission and not subject to review by any court or agency.

* * *

(c) If an employer notifies the Secretary that he intends to contest a citation issued under section 658(a) of this title or notification issued under subsection (a) or (b) of this section, or if, within fifteen working days of the issuance of a citation under section 658(a) of this title, any employee or representative of employees files a notice with the Secretary alleging that the period of time fixed in the citation for the abatement of the violation is unreasonable, the Secretary shall immediately advise the Commission of such notification, and the Commission shall afford an opportunity for a hearing (in accordance with section 554 of Title 5 but without regard to subsection (a) (3) of such section). The Commission shall thereafter issue an order, based on findings of fact, affirming, modifying, or vacating the Secretary's citation or proposed penalty, or directing other appropriate relief, and such order shall become final thirty days after its issuance. Upon a showing by an employer of a good faith effort to comply with the abatement requirements of a citation, and that abatement has not been completed because of factors beyond his reasonable control, the Secretary, after an opportunity for a hearing as provided in this subsection, shall issue an order affirming or modifying the abatement requirements in such citation. The rules of procedure prescribed by the Commission shall provide affected employees or representatives of affected employees an

opportunity to participate as parties to hearings under this subsection.

4. Sections 12(a), (b), (g), (j) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, 29 U.S.C. § 661(a), (b), (f), (i), provide as follows:

(a) The Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission is hereby established. The Commission shall be composed of three members who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, from among persons who by reason of training, education, or experience are qualified to carry out the functions of the Commission under this Chapter. The President shall designate one of the members of the Commission to serve as Chairman.

* * * *

(b) The terms of members of the Commission shall be six years except that (1) the members of the Commission first taking office shall serve, as designated by the President at the time of appointment, one for a term of two years, one for a term of four years, and one for a term of six years, and (2) a vacancy caused by the death, resignation, or removal of a member prior to the expiration of the term for which he was appointed shall be filled only for the remainder of such unexpired term. A member of the Commission may be removed by the President for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office.

* * * *

(f) Every official act of the Commission shall be entered of record, and its hearings and records shall be open to the public. The Commission is authorized to make such rules as are necessary for the orderly transaction of its proceedings. Unless the Commission has adopted a different rule, its proceedings shall be in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

* * * *

(i) An administrative law judge appointed by the Commission shall hear, and make a determination upon, any proceeding instituted before the Commission and any motion in connection therewith, assigned to such administrative law judge by the Chairman of the Commission, and shall make a report of any such determination which constitutes his final disposition of the proceedings. The report of the administrative law judge shall become the final order of the Commission within thirty days after such report by the administrative law judge, unless within such period any Commission member has directed that such report shall be reviewed by the Commission.

6. Rule 100 of the Rules of Procedure of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, 29 C.F.R. § 2200.100, provides as follows:

Rule 100 Settlement

(a) Policy

Settlement is permitted at any stage of the proceedings. Settlements submitted for consideration after the Judge's decision has been directed for review shall be filed with the Executive Secretary. A settlement proposal shall be approved when it is consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act.

(b) Requirements

Every settlement proposal submitted to the Judge or commission shall include, where applicable, the following:

(1) A motion to amend or withdraw a citation, notification or proposed penalty, notice of contest, or petition for modification of abatement;

(2) A statement that payment of the penalty has been tendered or a statement of a promise to pay; and

(3) A statement that the cited condition has been abated or a statement of the date by which abatement will be accomplished.

(c) *Filing; service and notice*

When a settlement proposal is filed with the Judge or Commission, it shall also be served upon represented and unrepresented affected employees in the manner prescribed for notices of contest § 2200.7. Proof of service shall accompany the settlement proposal. A settlement proposal shall not be approved until at least 10 days following service of the settlement proposal on affected employees.

Effective January 1, 1980, 44 Fed. Reg. 70,106 (1979)

. . . .